BEHIND THE SCENES OF CAR COMMERCIALS! SEE PAGE 16

AUSTRALIAN CAR MECHANIC

ISSUE 79

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50th lap

Aussie brake brand marks major milestone

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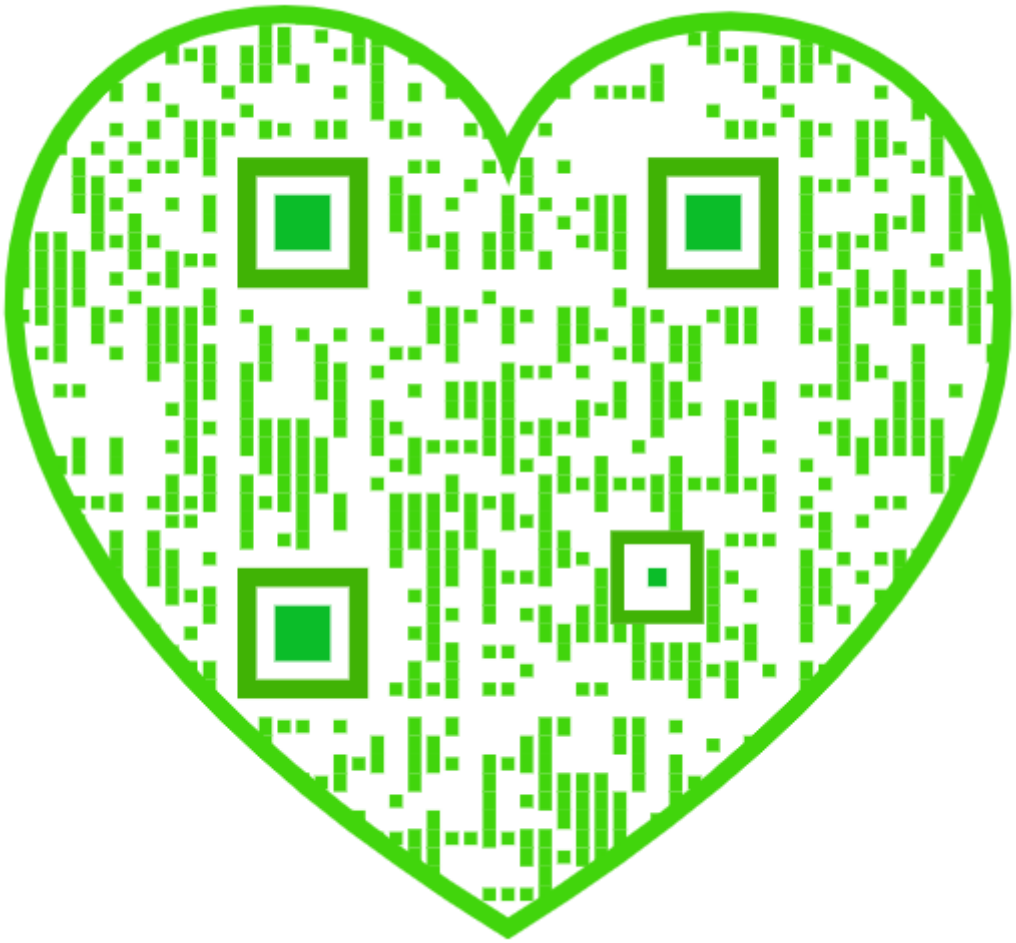

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Sometimes, car ads look like they've just helicoptered the vehicle in, rather than driven it.

Victory laps

Ready for a new year

What are you looking forward to most in 2025?

Are there new opportunities on the horizon? Maybe this is the year you'll finally make that big-time purchase you've been holding off on.

You know the one I mean.

The new year brings with it many chances for renewal, and chances to start fresh.

With the cost of living playing a major factor in mechanics' workshops, it might be time to look to 2025 as a year for change and pivoting to ensure what's working continues, and what isn't stops.

Speaking of stopping, this edition of Australian Car Mechanic has a keen focus on brakes.

They're a huge part of the vehicle repair industry, and we'll be taking a look at some of the big players in Australia when it comes to delivering quality brake parts.

Ever wonder what goes into filming those epic vehicle commercials?

You know the ones – where a vehicle is driven somewhere you yourself would never consider driving it.

Maybe up a cliffside, or in the ocean – the kind of scenic advertisement that pushes the boundaries of belief.

Contributing writer Iain Curry takes us on one such journey, taking an in-depth look at how Toyota Land Cruisers of all eras band together to film in stunning Kakadu.

Speaking of rare gems, Iain also takes us down the French quarter, looking back at Citroens and their role in Aussie car lover lore.

Sadly, the days of new Citroens coming Down Under are gone, but that doesn't mean we can't fall in love all over again with their debonaire eccentricities. ACM

Harry Murtough – Editor

On the **cover**

Disc Brakes Australia's ethos has always been about delivering the very best in braking components to the nation.
The company has been ingrained in Australia's braking category since the 70s, and has grown massively while maintaining its True Blue roots.
In this special brakes edition of Australian Car Mechanic, we get the rundown on how much growing DBA has done and where its path ahead lies.

Booking **deadlines**

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CAR
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CEO
John Murphy
COO
Christine Clancy
Sales Director
Bradley Buchanan
Editor
Harry Murtough
harry.murtough@primecreative.com.au
Client Success
Arianna Lucini
arianna.lucini@primecreative.com.au
National Advertising Manager
Michael Kinsela
michael.kinsela@primecreative.com.au
M. 0422 635 778
Design
Blake Storey
Subscriptions
P. +61 3 9690 8766
subscriptions@primecreative.com.au
Website
www.mechanics-mag.com.au
Background image
Iain Curry

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Head Office
379 Docklands Dr, Docklands VIC 3008
P: +61 3 9690 8766
enquiries@primecreative.com.au
www.primecreative.com.au

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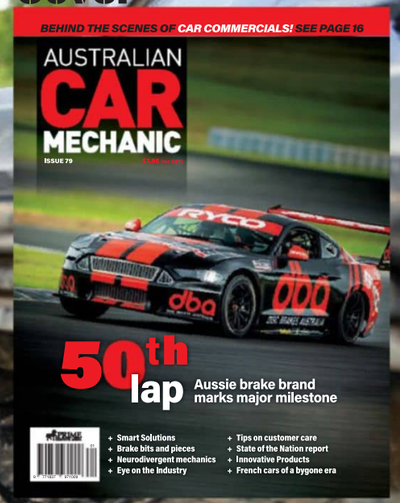
Cover



Contributors

IAIN CURRY has been a specialist motoring writer and photographer for 15 years, working for a variety of magazines in Australia, United Kingdom, USA, Germany and Sweden. He is former editor of Performance BMW magazine and features writer for GT Porsche magazine, and has been fortunate enough to photograph Formula 1, the Le Mans 24 Hours, World Touring Cars, V8 Supercars and a range of adventure sports.

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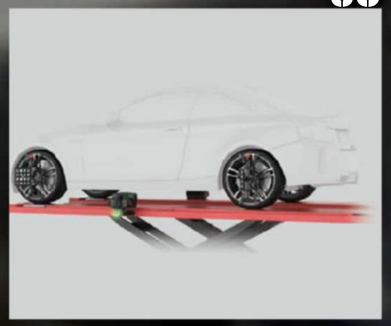
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Australia's own

50 Years of Disc Brakes Australia: Slotting themselves into history

In 1973, a frustrated Holden owner strolled into a small Sydney automotive workshop, searching for a simple fix—a new brake rotor for their car. What happened next would kickstart a legacy. Phillip Joseph Sr. and his father, Oscar Joseph, took on the challenge, creating a custom rotor for the 1967 Holden HD/HR. That one job sparked the establishment of a small rotor manufacturing business, which started a selling brake rotor locally two years later, laying the foundation for what would become Disc Brakes Australia (DBA).

Fast forward 50 years, and DBA is now a global name in braking, known for its innovation and Aussie-made quality. This anniversary isn't just about looking back; it's about celebrating the grit, innovation, and drive that built a brand trusted by drivers around the world.

Through the decades

In the 1960s, most cars relied on drum brakes. While they served their purpose, they often struggled to keep up with the demands of faster, heavier vehicles. Disc brakes were emerging as a superior alternative, but in Australia, they weren't easy to come by. That's where DBA stepped in, crafting rotors tailored to Australian cars. Starting with models like the MG and Ford Cortina, their work quickly attracted attention.

By the 1980s, the business adopted the name we recognise today - Disc Brakes Australia (DBA). With a sharp focus and a growing reputation, DBA set out to dominate the local replacement market for brake rotors. But their ambitions didn't stop there. In the 1990s, DBA began supplying brake rotors to Holden and Ford Australian manufacturing plants and their service

Images: Disc Brakes Australia.

DBA's 4000 Series rotor with its distinctive T3 slot design & DBA Upgrade caliper.

network, a testament to the quality and reliability of its engineering, product and supply chain capabilities. At the same time, the company started pushing boundaries by testing their products in motorsport and refining them for high-performance applications.

Motorsport became more than just a proving ground—it became part of DBA's identity, reflecting the brand's commitment to performance and reliability. A breakthrough was the entry into V8 Supercar Utes in 2002, running DBA 4000 Series as the controlled category brake rotor. This legacy continues today through partnerships like the RX8 Cup, where the series in Australia and across the Tasman in New Zealand depend on DBA's trusted 4000 Series rotors, demonstrating the confidence the motorsport community places in DBA. Furthermore, collaborating with programs like Fastrack Experiences: Exotic Supercars, which equips supercars like Lamborghinis, Ferraris & Lotuses with DBA brakes, the company consistently proves its products can deliver under serious pressure.

Always upgrading

The early 2000s marked another milestone for DBA, thanks to one game-changing invention: the Kangaroo Paw ventilation system. Unlike traditional straight-vane rotors, this clever design uses unique diamond- and tear-drop-shaped pillars to keep rotors cooler. The result? Up to 20 per cent better heat dissipation, making brakes more reliable and durable. Whether tackling harsh outback tracks or flying around a racetrack, this design became a favourite for drivers demanding more from their vehicles.

DBA didn't stop with just cooling technology. They introduced heat-monitoring features like Thermographic Heat Paint and advanced slot designs like the T2 and T3 - the latter being instrumental in making braking smoother, quieter and more efficient.

In 2003, DBA took a leap, launching into the U.S. market. It was a bold move, but one that paid off. Today, DBA products are trusted worldwide, from Europe to the Americas and across Asia.

No matter the drive or how it's driven, DBA has a braking solution for it. Their brake rotors are grouped into three categories:

- Street Series: Reliable, premium OE-replacement rotors for everyday drivers.
- 4000 Series: Built tougher for 4WDs, off-roaders, and serious brake upgrade seekers.
- 5000 Series: Performance rotors designed for powerful track and street applications.

The same goes for DBA brake pads, which are tailored to everything from daily commutes to heavy-duty towing and motorsport, supported by a comprehensive range of hydraulic components such as calipers, brake cylinders, and brake hoses.

Brisbane Disrtibution Centre in the 1990s.

DBA has had an ongoing presence at the Supercars, signifying a strong partnership between two Australian staples.

DBA's own V8 Supercars Ute from the early 2000s.

With the rise of electric vehicles (EVs) and autonomous cars, DBA continues to push their innovation. Recognising the unique braking demands of EVs and hybrids compared to traditional combustion engine vehicles, DBA has expanded its offerings with the Street Series EV brake pads series.

These pads feature a specialised friction formulation, and a uniquely designed shim tailored to the distinct performance characteristics of EVs.

More recently, DBA has introduced a range of Upgrade Kits for those looking to overhaul their braking system entirely. These kits combine rotors, pads, and calipers for the ultimate performance boost.

Braking new ground

DBA's journey hit another big milestone in 2018 when it joined Amotiv Ltd (formerly GUD Holdings). This partnership has helped the company scale up while staying focused on what it does best—making brakes that drivers trust.

In 2024, DBA opened a cutting-edge National Distribution Centre in Truganina, Victoria. This 11,500-square-metre facility with capacity for over 3,000 pallets and over 10,000 individual pick-face locations, is more than just a warehouse. It shows that DBA is serious about meeting customer needs quickly and efficiently, while continuing to grow.

DBA General Manager Vera Gerard

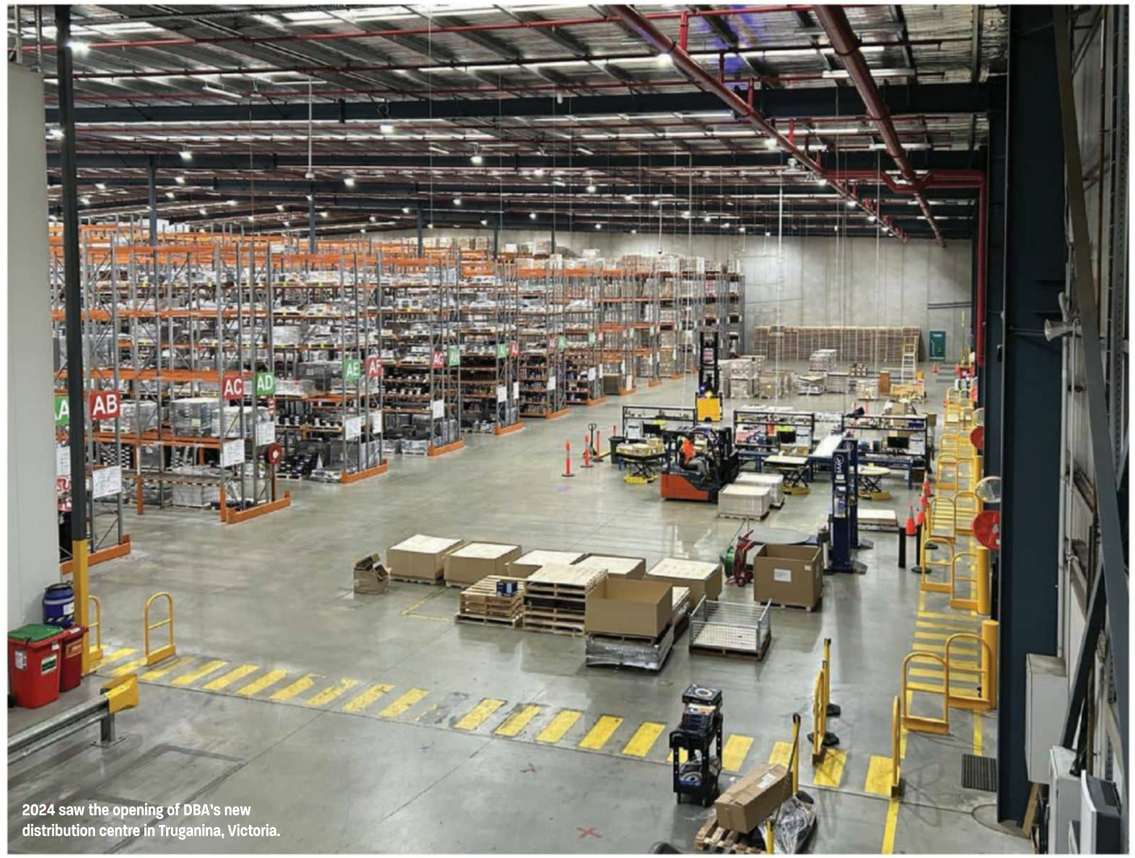
sums it up perfectly: “Fifty years of DBA stand as a tribute to Australian resilience and innovation. From our modest roots in a Sydney workshop, we’ve become a global leader, renowned for our braking performance and trusted as a brand synonymous with safety and innovation.”

DBA’s story is a reminder of what can happen when determination meets innovation— from solving one driver’s problem in a Sydney workshop to becoming a globally recognised brand. As the brand marks its 50th year, the company isn’t just looking back on what’s been achieved, it’s gearing up for what’s next.

Here’s to 50 years of Aussie-made excellence—and the exciting road ahead. ACM

For more information please head over to DBA.com.au and follow its social channels to stay up to date

5000 Series rotor assembly at DBA in Silverwater, Australia’s only rotor manufacturing plant.



2024 saw the opening of DBA’s new distribution centre in Truganina, Victoria.

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From our sweeping plains, to flooding rains, when you use Ryco filters your vehicle will have what it takes when you’re on your next adventure.

So when you want to be Australia ready, be Ryco Ready.

Image: Bapcor.

Ready and rearing

The Protex range comes with a minimum 12-month/20,000km warranty, demonstrating its dedication to reliability for road goers.

Protex: Unmatched reliability and industry-leading warranty for automotive braking solutions

In the world of automotive components, reliability is everything. When it comes to braking systems, the margin for error is non-existent. Drivers, mechanics, and enthusiasts alike rely on top-quality products that not only deliver consistent performance but also stand the test of time. That's where Protex comes in - an industry leader in automotive braking solutions, offering peace of mind with durable, high-performing products backed by a comprehensive warranty.

The Protex promise: Durability meets innovation

At the heart of Protex's product comprehensive range is the commitment to providing durable braking components, engineered to perform under the most demanding conditions. Whether you're navigating the rugged outback, towing a heavy load, or simply commuting through urban traffic, Protex has a solution for every vehicle and driving condition.

Protex Ultra 4WD, for instance, is specifically designed to handle the weight burden that comes with 4WD modifications and heavy-duty usage. With enhanced friction materials and superior heat dissipation, Protex ensures braking systems remain reliable even under extreme pressure.

Additionally, Protex rotors and pads are engineered with advanced materials that resist wear, ensuring they maintain optimal performance over the long term. Protex brake pads feature an innovative ceramic formulation that not only prolongs pad and rotor life, but also minimises dust and noise.

Exceptional product warranty

Protex doesn't just promise high-quality products - it backs them with one of the industry's most comprehensive warranties. Our commitment to reliability is demonstrated through its minimum 12-month/20,000km warranty, across its product range, providing customers with the assurance that their braking system is built to last.

This extensive warranty not only covers manufacturing defects but also supports Protex's confidence in its rigorous testing procedures, including dynamometer and real-world evaluations. These tests simulate the harshest conditions, ensuring that every Protex component lives up to its name in terms of durability, performance, and safety.

Tested and proven

Each Protex product is tested to meet or exceed original equipment manufacturer (OEM) standards. From Protex Ultra Plus for high-performance applications to Protex Ultra designed for reliable everyday use, every item undergoes strict quality evaluations to guarantee top-tier performance, even for vehicles with uncommon specifications.

Why choose Protex?

Consistent performance: Protex products are made from high-quality materials designed for long-lasting, consistent performance across all vehicle types.

Advanced design: advanced technology Ultracoat Z360® Anti-Corrosion coating and high carbon formulation for better thermal stability, enhances the overall driving experience. The materials used in Protex ceramic pads assist in improving brake response and greater resistance to fade—crucial for both everyday driving and high-performance demands.

Comprehensive Warranty: a minimum 12 months/20,000km warranty ensures peace of mind and reflects Protex's confidence in its product quality.

When choosing Protex, you're not just selecting a brake component—you're investing in safety, reliability, and the assurance that your vehicle's most critical system will perform when you need it most. With industry-leading warranties, a commitment to innovation, and a track record of excellence, Protex continues to set the standard in automotive braking solutions.

For those who demand the best, Protex delivers. Choose Protex, and drive with confidence. ACM

To find out more about Protex's comprehensive range visit protexparts.com.au

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Breaking the bias

Brake bias explained by Bendix

Brake bias or brake balance describes the split of brake force between the front and rear wheels when the brakes are applied.

In road going vehicles, brake bias is set from the factory, with cars typically having a front bias owing to most of them having the engine located up front, and therefore, more weight over the front wheels. If a front wheel drive car, this bias towards the front brakes is also greater.

But it's just not front wheel drives where bias favours the front. Think of some of the best sellers on Australian roads, dual cab utilities, most of these are rear wheel drive (with selectable 4X4), but the nature of these vehicles with their rear tubs or trays, means that when unladen, most of the weight is at the front, even more so if fitted with bulbar and other accessories.

Another factor that leads OEMs to favour front bias, is that in most driving situations, stopping forward momentum means forward weight transfer, it's the main reason why front disc brake rotors are normally a larger diameter than at the rear.

While brake bias is 'set' on road going vehicles, newer technology such as Electronic Stability Control (ESC) – which is mandatory for all new cars sold in Australia – can control how the vehicle distributes brake force in emergency situations, applying the brakes to individual wheels to stabilise the car, particularly when negotiating corners. The system works by picking up the driver's steering wheel inputs, especially sudden movements, and automatically applies selective braking to reduce the likelihood of oversteer and overcorrection.

Manual brake bias adjustment in racing cars

Most professional racing categories, including Supercars, use technology that allows drivers to manually adjust brake bias themselves. This makes for a busy operating environment given these heavy tin tops already need a lot of driver input to extract maximum performance.

In the case of Supercars, there are a couple of different systems to adjust brake bias. In the Bendix Racing Team Camaro piloted by Nick Percat, adjustment is actioned using a hand lever to the left of the gear shifter – forward movement on the shifter moves bias to the front and rear movement to the rear wheels. More delicate adjustments are made using a rotary dial on the end of the level.

Nick Percat said the ability to adjust brake bias in his race car to suit conditions was critical in achieving faster lap times and staying at the pointy end of the pack.

"When the difference between making a podium or finishing mid field comes down to split seconds, it's vital that the car's kept in optimum racing trim," Nick explained.

"Making set-up changes to areas such as sway bar stiffness and brake bias, allows drivers to adjust on the go, to try and best keep the car handling at its peak.

"Greater front brake bias will make the car more stable under braking but increases the risk of understeer or brake lock up. Having more rear brake bias will allow the car to turn more easily when braking, however too much and there's more chance of oversteering.

"There are a lot of variables that affect the performance and overall balance of the racecar, and this can change from corner to corner as the race progresses. Factors such as tyre degradation, fuel levels, track temperatures and rain will all affect the car's balance and handling characteristics – this is why you'll see Supercar drivers regularly go to the brake bias lever multiple times in a lap." ACM

Driving on the circuit requires split-second decision making, including applying brake bias.

Supercars drivers – including Bendix Racing Team's Nick Percat – are no strangers to the effects of brake bias.

Images: Bendix Australia.

Into the Wild

Toyota Australia's Jimmy Chin talks us through the new Prado's evaluation testing in some of the Northern Territory's most extreme terrain

WORDS: **IAIN CURRY**
IMAGES: **IAIN CURRY AND TOYOTA AUSTRALIA**

Workdays don't come much better that waking to the sound of jabiru birds and a hot sun rising over Kakadu's scorched red earth.
For Toyota Australia's Jimmy Chin, this special part of Australia's Top End is home for the next week.

He's a core member of Toyota's team launching the all-new LandCruiser Prado 4X4 in the Northern Territory, where perfect planning and expert support is needed in such a demanding, unpredictable environment. For a mechanic, the contrast to a packed and bustling metro area service department couldn't be starker.

Jimmy's job title is vehicle evaluation and suitability test technician, which in this case, means ensuring the new-generation Prado's even more competent, refined and desirable than its huge-selling predecessor.

As ours is the world's largest LandCruiser vehicle market, Toyota Australia's engineering team is deeply involved in developing and testing the new Prado. Helping matters, our sunburnt country has 80 per cent of the world's environment types, and Australia's the only testing location outside Japan for the model.

With all the hard work done, the time finally comes to launch the new car to local media for evaluation. For Prado, that's not going to happen in city suburbs, hence our Kakadu National Park gathering just ahead of wet season, and the mercury exceeding 40°C each day.

A day's work

Jimmy's on the frontline. "Part of my role is new model launch support, including deciding on drive routes for journalists

Torrential rain in the Top End naturally leads to a fresh coat of mud on 4WDs.

Now we know how they get up there in the ads...

to go on," he says. "We want it to be as engaging and exciting as possible, showing the LandCruiser Prado in its best light, but we also need to consider the risk factor. It needs to be safe."

The country up here is wild and extreme. There's not just mad heat, but treacherous roads, hidden obstacles and the potential for huge rains and flash floods. Proving the point, day one of our drive sees the Prado's thermometer registering 43°C outside, then almost immediately plunging 15°C as the heavens open. Cue huge, deep muddy red-earth puddles for the Prado cavalcade to splash and slide through.

With all that successfully navigated, there's still the kangaroos, water buffalos, wild horses and – most importantly – crocs to be wary about. All of the above (plus a donkey and dingo) got close enough for a good look at the new Toyota 4X4.

Jimmy and his team have seen it all before. "Within the last month or two we've come out, reconned and checked all the roads we'd be using," he explains. "Not just once, but several times. We've had to modify the routes several times, as off-roading is a lot more restricted due to it being in a National Park. We've had some challenges to get approval to make the drive as engaging as possible, but managed to get to places that aren't marked on a map or accessible to the public. That's fantastic."

Desert storm

Some of the routes are tortuous. Incredible incline volcanic rock climbs, deep water crossings, mud and sand trails and fast, open bush roads with some of the finest red dust known to man. The new Prados – superbly capable 4X4s – soak up the punishment, but Jimmy and his crew are prepared for any issues.

"Many things need to be taken into account," he says. "For spare parts, it depends on the severity of the course. There's a level of calculated risk in terms of acceptable damage we can anticipate." This is key, as many of the journalists are experienced 4X4 drivers, and must thoroughly test the Toyotas to give informed evaluation for their audience. Those reading the reviews will include potential buyers, and they're hungry for real-world testing opinions.

"We've brought at least two additional

From the bustling metropolis of Melbourne to the rugged and wild outback, Jimmy's a true road warrior.

spare tyres and a set of side steps for each vehicle," Jimmy says. "We anticipate there's a high chance these will be contacted or damaged because of the nature of the vehicle and where we're testing it. Some of the roads, tracks and trails not being open to the public mean they're not maintained."

Jimmy's in a support vehicle (a Toyota LandCruiser 300 Series) with cage trailer behind. Inside are the spare wheels, recovery tracks, tools, emergency kits and more. "I've a full travel toolkit which covers us in most situations," he explains. "It includes a torque wrench, sockets, tyre pressure gauge, cable ties and race tape, just in case. We have the usual sort of straps, fixing screws and bolts."

Stunt double

Throughout the drive Jimmy's in the background, ready to jump into action as required. Maybe it's the sheer rugged ability of the Prado, maybe it's the exact planning, but all goes seamlessly with only a couple of punctures to report. At day's end the team give each test Prado a good looking over, checking tyre pressures, wheel nut torque and that engine fluids are still level.

Naturally, there's many more aspects to think about on such an event. Vehicle movements must be well managed, and of course you must fuel the things. "If you go to a remote area, the basics are a must," says Jimmy, his experience in this field proving vital. "You must have a recovery kit and a first aid kit on board, even if we have a medic on these events. There has to be enough snacks and water to get us through in case something does happen. We must be self-sufficient."

I'd imagine there's a solid number of mechanics reading this wondering how they could get a gig like Jimmy's. Born and raised in Melbourne with an interest in cars from boyhood, he progressed into automotive from an engineering background. He's based at Toyota's Product Centre at its Centre of Excellence facility in Altona, Victoria, where the manufacturing plant once produced Camrys until it closed in October 2017.

"You should have an open mind, a willingness to travel and just be engaged," Jimmy says of getting to his current role. "Be enthusiastic and try to reach the role you want to do. Take up opportunities and be open to trying different things."

He also advises up-skilling your driving, which for most car enthusiasts should be fun money well spent. "It's always good in our role to take on defensive driving courses, as well as off-road driver training," Jimmy says. "It'll build up your driving skill level; which is important because we do evaluate a lot of cars."

As for potential employers, a brand like Toyota has the size, budget and reputation for thoroughness to embark on exhaustive research and development. "It's the big companies which are the ones that mainly do this level of evaluation and testing," says Jimmy. "Those and aftermarket accessory companies, they're the ones to go for."

Finally, I ask Jimmy what it's like to prepare and look after a fleet of off-road Prados in some of Australia's harshest conditions when they're being tested to the extreme by motoring journalists. Drivers who, let's be honest, don't have a reputation for having much mechanical sympathy.

Jimmy's grin says it all. "They drive the cars how they're meant to be driven. They help us." After three days of hardcore testing and only a couple of flat tyres to show for it, looks like all that hard development work has paid off. ACM

Kakadu showcases the full array of Aussie weather, making it a perfect locale for testing 4X4s.

While plenty of city-slickers will want to get their hands on the new Toyota LandCruiser Prado, it's good to showcase what it's got when it comes to off-road performance.

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Job well done

How to boost customer loyalty in the automotive industry

WORDS:
JEFF RICHARDS, NATIONAL PRESIDENT, IAME.

Customer loyalty is the cornerstone of success for any business. In the highly competitive automotive industry, it is essential for maintaining a steady revenue stream and building a strong reputation. In this article, we share professional strategies to help you enhance customer loyalty and foster long-term relationships in the automotive sector.

Understand your customers' needs

Customer loyalty starts with understanding your customers.

- Data Collection: Gather insights on customer preferences, purchase behaviors, and service histories using Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems.
- Personalised Service: Use the data to tailor experiences. For example, remind customers when their vehicle is due for servicing or offer accessories suited to their vehicle model.

Building relationships on trust and understanding ensures customers feel valued, understood and prioritised.

Personalise the customer experience

A tailored approach can significantly impact how customers perceive your business.

- Track service history: use a customer management system to maintain detailed records of past interactions, enabling you to offer personalised recommendations.
- Send timely reminders: notify customers about upcoming service dates, registrations, or seasonal maintenance needs.
- Exclusive offers: provide loyal customers with personalised discounts on repairs or products.

Deliver outstanding customer service

Exceptional customer service is fundamental to earning and retaining loyalty.

- Transparent communication: clearly explain the scope of work, costs, and timelines. Customers appreciate honesty and clarity. Use visuals or photos to clarify repair needs and gain customer approval quickly.
- On-time delivery: consistently meet deadlines to demonstrate reliability and professionalism.
- Continuous improvement training plan: ensure your team is equipped with the latest skills and knowledge by having an ongoing continuous improvement plan in place to ensure you stay ahead in technical expertise, customer service and best practices. Ensure that all employees, from sales teams to service technicians, are trained to deliver friendly, professional service.

Establish a loyalty program

Loyalty programs are a proven method to encourage repeat business and reward long-standing customers.

- Reward points system: offer points for every service or product purchase, redeemable for discounts or complimentary checks.
- Referral incentives: reward customers who refer others with discounts on services or products.

Maintain a system to track loyalty points and incentives, ensuring accurate and timely rewards.

Maintain high standards of quality and reliability

Consistency in quality is key to retaining customers.

- Use tusted products: stock and use reliable, high-quality parts and materials, to ensure customer satisfaction.
- Guarantee your work: offer warranties for repairs and parts to build confidence in your services.
- Transparent pricing: provide clear, itemised quotes and invoices that include prices to avoid misunderstandings.
- Educate customers: explain the benefits of regular maintenance and high-quality parts.
- Resolve issues professionally: address complaints or disputes promptly and fairly to reinforce trust and reliability.

Engage with your community

Community involvement can enhance your brand's reputation and loyalty.

- Sponsor local events: partner with community initiatives or automotive events to increase your visibility.
- Support local businesses: collaborate with other businesses to offer mutual discounts and services.

Actively seek and implement feedback

Customer feedback is a powerful tool for continuous improvement.

- Conduct surveys: regularly ask customers for their opinions on your services and overall experience.
- Monitor reviews: keep an eye on online platforms such as Google and social media, responding professionally to both positive and negative reviews.
- Adapt based on input: use customer suggestions to refine your offerings or adjust your service and customer satisfaction processes.

Stay ahead of industry trends

Innovation is essential in a rapidly evolving market.

- Offer eco-friendly solutions: offer services for hybrid and electric vehicles.
- Environmental sustainability: promote sustainable practices such as recycling workshop materials and ensure your automotive workshop operates in an environmentally friendly manner.
- Adopt new technologies: integrate advanced diagnostic tools and equipment to enhance your service quality.

Provide post-sale support

Customer relationships don't end after a sale; in fact, this is when loyalty-building truly begins. Ensure robust post-sale support by:

- Following up: check in with customers after a purchase or service to ensure satisfaction.
- Offering maintenance packages: provide discounted packages for regular maintenance to encourage repeat visits.
- Keeping in touch: send updates about new products, recalls, or promotions to maintain engagement.

Customers who feel cared for post-purchase are more likely to return and recommend your business to others.

Customer loyalty is not just about repeat business, it's about creating lasting relationships that bring value to both your customers and your business. By focusing on exceptional service, leveraging technology, and providing high-quality products and services, you can build a loyal customer base that supports your long-term success.

At the Institute of Mechanical Engineers, we are committed to helping our members grow their businesses. From professional training programs to workshop tools, equipment, signage, and stationery products, we offer the resources you need to deliver excellence to your customers. ACM

For more information about IAME, visit iame.com.au

Leverage technology to strengthen engagement

Technology streamlines customer interactions and keeps them engaged.

- Automated communication: use email or SMS to remind customers about appointments or promotions.
- Social media presence: share updates, tips, and success stories on platforms like Facebook and Instagram to keep your business visible and approachable.
- Online booking systems: simplify the customer experience with convenient online appointment scheduling.

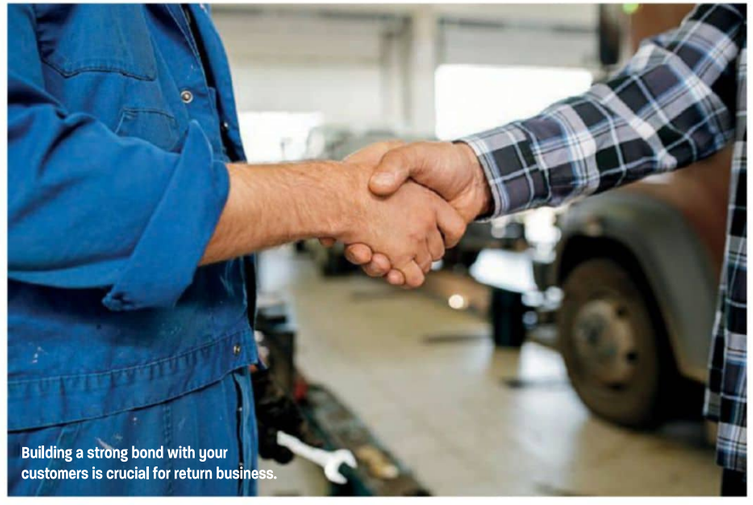
Demonstrate customer appreciation

Showing gratitude to your customers can go a long way in fostering loyalty.

- Appreciation events: host open days or workshops featuring demonstrations of tools or maintenance tips.
- Seasonal promotions: offer discounts during holidays or special occasions. For example, offer a reduced price for a pre-holiday vehicle check.
- Unexpected rewards: include complimentary perks, such as a free car wash after a repair, to surprise customers.

Build a reputation for integrity and trustworthiness

In an industry where trust is paramount, your integrity sets you apart.



Building a strong bond with your customers is crucial for return business.

Receiving transmission

Penrite introduces innovative new ATF Multivehicle ULV

Penrite has just introduced ATF Multivehicle ULV to complement its already extensive range of automotive transmission fluids. ATF Multivehicle ULV is a full-synthetic, ultra-low viscosity (ULV) automatic transmission fluid (ATF) meeting the requirements of Ford MERCON® ULV and Dexron® ULV fluids. It is an advanced formulation fluid, designed for modern, high speed automatic transmissions, providing optimum performance levels and outstanding high temperature resistance.

Penrite ATF Multivehicle ULV offers improved fuel economy and transmission efficiency, with smooth power transfer, excellent cold weather performance whilst also reducing deposit formation. The full synthetic base oils used, combined with the shear stable formulation also enhance heat resistance and long life, extended wear protection. The use of ATF Multivehicle ULV can also reduce carbon dioxide emissions by improving a vehicle's fuel economy.

Penrite ATF Multivehicle ULV is suitable for increasingly popular models like Ford Ranger, Mustang, Everest, F150, GM Camaro, Cadillac, Silverado and VW Amarok with 10-speed automatic transmissions. ATF Multivehicle ULV can also be used in Mercedes Benz 9G-Tronic 725.0 or 725.1 transmissions (NAG3), where MB 236.17 is required. It is also suitable where Nissanmatic P ATF is specified in Z and Z34 Series vehicles with 9 speed automatic transmissions, such as the R53 Pathfinder and in Mazda CX-30, CX-60 and CX-90 models, where Mazda ATF A7 is required.

With the introduction of ATF Multivehicle ULV, Penrite, an Australian, family-owned company, continues to broaden the range of products manufactured in their Australian production facilities, as they approach the 100-year anniversary of making quality lubricants and fluids for this country's extreme conditions. **ACM**

Image: Penrite.

Penrite ATF Multivehicle ULV is suitable for a tonne of popular Australian vehicles including Ford's Ranger and Everest.

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PTEX163

Images: Niterra Australia.

Not just experts in spark plugs, Niterra Australia also builds the best in crankshafts, camshafts and sensors among other components.

Power up

Niterra's Power Perks program

Niterra Australia, has launched the Power Perks loyalty program, providing a streamlined and rewarding experience for automotive workshop owners. Designed to offer exceptional value, Power Perks allows customers – including mechanics - to earn points on purchases of NGK, NTK, or KYB products, redeemable for a wide variety of rewards.

With its simple points system, members can earn:

- 1 point for each NGK Spark Plug purchased
- 2 points for each NGK Glow Plug purchased
- 5 points for each NGK Ignition Coil, KYB Suspension product, or NTK Sensor purchased

Additional points are available for joining (50 points), completing profile information (30 points), and on birthdays (50 points). Points can be redeemed for rewards, including digital Mastercards, tools, merchandise, travel vouchers, and unique experiences. Every 1,000 points equates to $20 on a digital Mastercard, ensuring flexibility for members.

The program also offers exclusive competitions where participants can win prizes such as outdoor tools, electronics, white goods, and various vouchers. Future enhancements include gamification elements, leaderboards for friendly competition, and regular prize draws, further enriching the program.

Legacy of service

Paris Mouratidis, Executive General Manager of Sales and Marketing, emphasized the inclusivity of Power Perks: "This program rewards all participants equally, regardless of their location, business size, or purchase volume. It's designed to help customers grow their business while also offering personal rewards."

Since its establishment in 1980, Niterra Australia has been a trusted supplier in the automotive and medical sectors. Renowned for its NGK and NTK brands, the company partners with OEMs to deliver high-quality spark plugs, ignition coils, and technical sensors. Its commitment to quality and innovation has made it a preferred choice for manufacturers and trade repairers.

Beyond the automotive industry, Niterra Australia distributes medical oxygen concentrators under the Caire brand, supporting patients requiring oxygen therapy. This dual expertise highlights the company's dedication to improving lives across industries. ACM

For more information on Power Perks and Niterra Australia's product range, visit ngk.com.au

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Castrol

Clean driving

Air filters built for Australian roads and conditions

Before your customers head out on their next Australian adventure, make sure their vehicle is Ryco Ready for the challenges it's about to face.

Ryco filters are designed, developed and tested in Australasia's only dedicated filtration lab with Australian conditions in mind.

With a unique environment and geology, drivers in Australia have conditions that drivers elsewhere don't need to take into consideration. Australia's silica and ambient dust levels mean that contaminants your customer's engines are up against are unlike the ones drivers face overseas. It also means that filters designed and engineered overseas are not geared to work best with our natural surroundings in mind.

With over 85 years of experience, Ryco are Australia's oldest filtration company. They've been able to stand the test of time due to their ability to adapt new and exciting technologies to benefit drivers everywhere, from the racetrack to the highway.

Ryco filters will meet or exceed OE standards, with upgrade filters such as the Ryco SynTec® range and Ryco NanoCel™ range always exceeding OE standards.

Their Official Filtration Partnership with the Supercars Championship is a testament to the work put into their filtration development. Now drivers everywhere can use the same filters the professionals do, with the GEN3 Control Part technology being translated into passenger vehicle filtration.

So, when your customers want the best before their next drive, make sure they're Ryco Ready. **ACM**

To find the right filters you need, use Ryco's Filter Finder tool on rycofilters.com.au

Image: Ryco.

Ryco leads the way when it comes to delivering cutting-edge filtration to the Australian car parc.

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Image: SmartSafe.

Fully aligned

SmartSafe locks in with WA613

The SmartSafe WA613 uses smart wheel clamps which make alignment even more simple for mechanics. Pictured with WA613 tablet.

Mechanics, the future of wheel alignment has arrived.

Wheel alignments are a very common service for mechanics, so SmartSafe has introduced the WA613 wireless 3D alignment machine to make it as seamless as possible.

It's a competitive landscape out there for mechanics, making it vital to be equipped with technology that not only makes the job easy, but leaves customers happy.

The WA613 is an innovative machine that handles a car's wheel alignment needs, without major installation and unnecessary strain. Its portability allows for on-the-go services, helping attract more customers and broaden service offerings.

Locked in

The WA613 supports four-wheel alignment measurements, offering both standard and quick measurement modes. It outputs high-precision alignment results in just 30 seconds, making sure the job is done without compromising accuracy.

Key parameters such as toe, camber, caster, kingpin inclination, and thrust angle are measured alongside additional metrics like wheelbase, wheel track, axle offset, and centre offset.

As mentioned, the WA613 requires no installation, wiring, or calibration and is ready to use straight out of the box. Its space-saving design eliminates the need for beams or cabinets, allowing it to fit seamlessly into compact workshops. The patented magnesium alloy single-access wheel clamp is lightweight yet durable, featuring a built-in scale for pre-adjustments based on tyre diameter.

The innovative wheel clamp design makes it easy to operate, carry, and use, while magnetic measurement units eliminate the need for assembly or wiring, offering true plug-and-play functionality.

With its lightweight materials and compact packaging, the WA613 significantly reduces transport weight and volume, requiring only 20–30 per cent of the space and weight of traditional 3D alignment machines.

Smart system

The system ensures wireless data transmission via the ST13 intelligent connection terminal, which displays the measurement process and results while facilitating under-vehicle adjustments. Professional test reports are generated automatically, allowing for before-and-after comparisons and easy report sharing. Additionally, the WA613 is compatible with large scissor lifts and four-post lifts, making it a versatile addition to any automotive workshop.

Its comprehensive database includes positioning data for over 50,000 global vehicle models, with the option for user-defined entries to accommodate unique requirements. This, combined with its instant usability and high-performance features, makes it an indispensable tool for modern automotive service providers.

By incorporating this cutting-edge solution, shops can improve operational efficiency, elevate service quality, and drive greater profitability.

Find out more about the SmartSafe WA613 by visiting launchtech.com.au

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Precision at your fingertips

The Warren and Brown Tools Screen Slipping Torque Screwdriver

When it comes to delicate torque applications, whether you're assembling electronics, calibrating machinery, or working on precision automotive projects, accuracy is everything. In such fields, even the slightest deviation from the correct torque can cause catastrophic damage. This is why the Warren and Brown Tools Screen Slipping Torque Screwdriver (Part Number: 332070) is an indispensable tool for both professionals and DIY enthusiasts. Designed to deliver consistent, precise torque in a range of 2-8N·m, this screwdriver ensures that every screw is tightened just right - no more, no less.

The precision you need, when you need it

The cornerstone of the Warren and Brown Torque Screwdriver's design is its innovative slipping mechanism. This feature guarantees that once the set torque is reached, the tool 'slips', signaling to the user that the optimal tightening point has been achieved. This not only prevents over-tightening but also eliminates the risks of damaging sensitive components, which is a constant concern in precision-driven tasks.

With an accuracy of ±6 per cent, the tool ensures that every adjustment you make is reliable. This margin of error is incredibly tight, considering the scope of tasks the screwdriver can handle, making it suitable for a variety of industries, including electronics, automotive, and aerospace, where even the smallest discrepancy can lead to significant consequences.

Adjustable and easy to use

One of the standout features of this screwdriver is its adjustable scale, offering 0.1N·m increments for precise adjustments. Whether you're tightening small screws on a smartphone screen or calibrating equipment in a factory, this level of control is invaluable.

To adjust the torque, simply unlock the screwdriver by holding the upper cap and pressing the adjustment button. Then, turn the upper cap clockwise to increase the torque and counterclockwise to decrease it. The scale window provides clear, large torque values, while the fine scale ring lets you make incremental adjustments with precision. Once you've set your desired torque, lock it in place by pressing the adjustment button again, ensuring that your settings stay locked throughout use.

Image: Warren and Brown.

As well as being extremely efficient at its work, Warren and Brown Tools Screen Slipping Torque Screwdriver is light and ergonomic for its user.

The tool ensures **every adjustment** is reliable

Designed for comfort and durability

Not only does the Screen Slipping Torque Screwdriver excel in functionality, but it's also designed with comfort in mind. With a weight of just 330g and compact dimensions of 171x39x39mm, it is lightweight enough for extended use without causing hand fatigue. Its ergonomic design ensures a comfortable grip, even during long work sessions, making it an ideal tool for professionals who demand both precision and comfort in their daily tasks.

Audible confirmation for safe use

One of the most useful features of this torque screwdriver is the audible click indicator. When the set torque is reached, the tool emits a clear click, providing an audible confirmation that the screw has been tightened properly. This click not only reduces the chances of over-tightening but also gives users confidence that their work has been completed to specification. This feature is especially useful when working in environments where visual inspection isn't always possible, such as tight spaces or when working with intricate components.

A tool for every trade

Whether you're a technician calibrating equipment, a mechanic fine-tuning a vehicle, or a hobbyist assembling a project, the Warren and Brown Tools Screen Slipping Torque Screwdriver is your ally in precision.

The broad torque range of 2-8 N·m covers a variety of light to medium-duty tasks, while the adjustable scale and fine-tuning capabilities make it versatile enough for even the most meticulous work.

This torque screwdriver is engineered not just for accuracy, but for long-lasting durability, ensuring that it can handle a wide range of applications and provide reliable performance for years to come. ACM

Use code "ACM" for a 10 per cent discount at checkout. Coupon valid until March 31, 2025 (online orders only)! wbtools.com.au/screen-slipping-torque-screwdriver-2-8-nm.html

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Right tools for the job

CoolDrive Auto Parts: Your tools and equipment expert

As Australasia's preferred automotive parts distributor, CoolDrive Auto Parts is the go-to tools and equipment supplier for workshops across Australia and New Zealand.

Proudly Australian family-owned-and-operated, CoolDrive has established partnerships with global brands renowned for quality, innovation, and reliability, to ensure it offers its customers only the very best in tools and equipment.

Among these trusted partners are industry leaders such as Bosch, CPS, Tufflift, Alemlube, GYS, SP Tools, Launch, FCAR, Ravaglioli, Autel, TradeQuip, Ariazone, Macnaught, Branick, AutoTest, Jayair, Jaylec, Powerprobe, Ignite, Lubemate, Retracta, Kranzle, Aunger, and Tolsen.

Geared up

CoolDrive's exhaustive product range addresses every facet of vehicle maintenance and repair to ensure it can equip workshops with the tools needed to tackle any job, from simple oil changes right through to complex engine diagnostics.

From the simple to complex – CoolDrive Auto Parts has the right tools for the job.

Images: CoolDrive Auto Parts.

This comprehensive range caters to a wide variety of service demands including diagnostics, battery testing and charging, workshop equipment, hybrid and electric vehicles, air-conditioning, and engine cooling.

CoolDrive is further distinguished in the industry through not just its product offerings, but with the comprehensive technical training it offers, with practical, hands-on sessions ensuring workshops can remain at the forefront of service and repair proficiency.

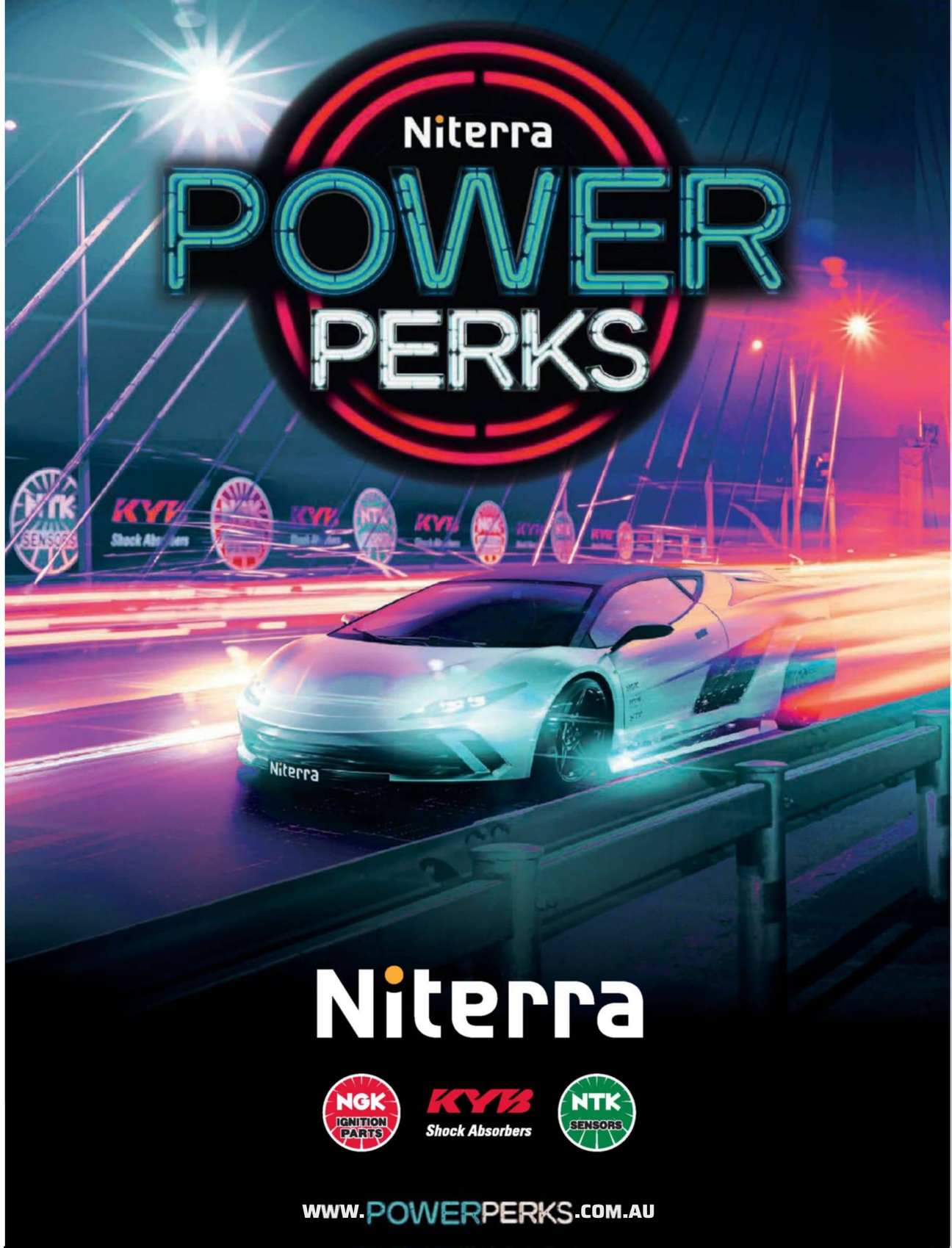
Tools down

Underpinning these industry-leading tools and equipment offerings is CoolData, CoolDrive's revolutionary technical resource platform.

This platform has been meticulously designed to equip workshops with an exhaustive online data system that streamlines the processes of maintaining, repairing, and diagnosing vehicles with unmatched accuracy and efficiency. ACM

For further information on CoolDrive, visit cooldrive.com.au

CoolDrive doesn't just equip workshops with quality tools, it also provides training as well.



Images: Bapcor.

Down the line

Driveline issues: Early detection and solutions

BW has a variety of OE-quality components designed to support drivelines.

A vehicle's driveline is essential for transferring power from the engine to the wheels.

Built for durability, it still faces wear and tear, so early detection is crucial for avoiding costly repairs.

Here's what to look for and how BW's product range can help address these issues effectively.

Diagnosing vibration issues

Vibrations often signal driveline problems. Look for the following:

- Worn universal joints: excessive play or rough movement indicates replacement is needed.
- Tail-shaft Imbalance: Unbalanced tail-shafts cause high-speed vibrations; proper alignment and balancing are essential.
- Centre bearing failure: worn centre bearings cause worsening vibrations. Humming sounds or floorboard vibrations often indicate issues.

BW driveline products are manufactured to high specifications, built for reliability and durability. With and extensive range of driveline products such as centre bearings and rubber couplings, BW ensures mechanics have reliable options to resolve these issues quickly.

Identifying CV failures

CV joints allow the driveshaft to flex and transmit power through steering and suspension movements.

Signs of wear include:

- Clicking or popping sounds during turns often indicate a worn or failing CV (constant velocity) joint, which may need to be replaced.
- Boot inspection: cracked or torn boots allow contaminants in, accelerating wear.

Grease covered wheel wells is an indication the boot is damaged.

BW Driveshafts are direct OE replacements, featuring high-quality CV joints, boots, and grease, making them ready to fit and a reliable solution for these common issues. BW also backs 2WD CV shafts with a five-year/100,000km warranty and 4WD, commercial, and taxi CV shafts with a one-year/20,000km warranty, providing peace of mind.

Leaks from the transmission or differential

Fluid leaks around transmission or differential components can lead to significant damage.

Regularly inspect:

- Seals and gaskets: worn seals result in fluid loss and possible lack of lubrication.
- Fluid condition: contaminated, milky or metallic looking fluid signals possible internal issues needing immediate attention.

Clunking and jerking during acceleration

If a vehicle clunks during acceleration, it may indicate:

- Differential wear: excessive backlash requires differential gear adjustment.
- Worn mounts: cracked engine or transmission mounts lead to clunking and jerking; frequent checks help prevent these issues.

Preventative maintenance

Prolong driveline component life with:

- Regular Lubrication: Keep U-joints and CV joints well-lubricated to avoid wear.
- Early Detection: Vibrations, clunking, and leaks should be addressed early to prevent costlier repairs. BW's extensive range of OE-quality driveline components is designed to help mechanics resolve driveline issues efficiently, ensuring vehicles stay on the road longer and run smoother.

The BW advantage

BW offers an extensive range of driveline components specifically designed for the Australian and New Zealand markets, ensuring OE quality that stabilises and supports driveline systems while reducing vibrations. With a minimum warranty of two years or 40,000km for most BW products, you can trust that BW's products are built to last. Driveline problems can quickly escalate if ignored. Regular inspections and proper maintenance with BW's reliable parts will keep vehicles running smoothly and efficiently.

BW - Your experts in Bearing and Driveline solutions

The right range: BW offers a full range of Bearings and Driveline products for the Australian market.

The category specialists: BW's team consists of experts in the bearing and the automotive industry with extensive knowledge and longstanding partnerships with global suppliers.

Trusted quality: BW products are designed for direct fit and to perform as well as the original equipment part, if not better. ACM

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Diesel minded

Australian inventions protecting diesel fuel systems

Responsive Engineering is a small company based in Canberra that has spent many years designing and perfecting Australian inventions that protect diesel fuel systems in vehicles commonly found in Australia.

Compared to older technology diesel fuel systems the common rail diesel suffers more from fuel quality issues due to their precision, high-performance engines, high fuel pressures and high operating temperatures than ever before and are unforgiving when it comes to any type of fuel contamination.

Even a very small amount of water or particles may wreck the main components such as pumps, injectors, and rails in a fuel system. They're often non-repairable and can cause catastrophic damage to your diesel vehicle.

With diesel Fuel contamination being one of the biggest issues that vehicle owners seem to have to deal with – and being a very expensive issue to resolve, this has become a focus for the company. Responsive Engineering's three main products are the Diesel Water Watch, a unique and sophisticated water trap with an alarm system, designed to detect water in the diesel fuel system, Diesel Fill - which prevents miss-fuelling and Responsive Diesel Fuel lubricant and conditioner.

Diesel Water Watch is an Australian invention that was designed specifically for Common Rail Diesel vehicles where it can effectively detect and remove dispersed and free water at high flow rates from the fuel. While most units are sold for 4WD and light commercial vehicles, Responsive Engineering's units can be found on diesel fuel systems used in marine, commercial and industrial applications as well.

The most important feature of the Diesel Water Watch is that it causes no restriction in high-pressure Common Rail fuel systems – unlike the addition of aftermarket filters. And Diesel Water Watch is proudly registered as a Made in Australia product.

While Diesel Water Watch will remove and hold most contaminants found in the fuel Diesel Water Watch is only set to alarm when water is found. For this reason, the Diesel Water Watch has a clear bowl allowing you to monitor your fuel quality and enable you to empty out the contaminants trapped in the bowl. It is important to keep in mind that while fuel filters on modern vehicles are very sophisticated, they are primarily designed to remove particles and they are designed to alarm when there is a restriction in the

A look at the Diesel Water Watch once installed, where it can detect water in the diesel fuel system.

Images: Specialist Tools Australia.

system – not when there is water in your fuel. And that is why – even in older diesel fuel systems manufacturers ran both a fuel filter and a water trap.

Common Rail Diesel vehicles need specifically designed fuel additives

Most mechanically minded diesel vehicle owners have tried a variety of fuel additives, often purchased at service stations or automotive supermarkets. And justifiably, there's always been a lot of scepticism surrounding the use of fuel and oil additives because the sales pitch and advertising on these additives often make claims that they simply don't deliver on, leaving the vehicle owners disillusioned about their effectiveness.

Common Rail Diesel engines have been developed to meet modern emission standards, and diesel fuel Sulphur has been reduced for the same reason. But low Sulphur fuel happens to compound another problem...lubricity! At a time when pumps and injectors rely even more on

Wrong Fuel?
Diesel Fill
Protection against filling up with the wrong fuel.
diesel
petrol
Simply screw out your existing fuel cap and replace it with Diesel Fill to prevent accidental mis-fuelling.

diesel fuel for lubrication, it has been reduced in the fuel.

Responsive Engineering has developed and produced here in Australia; a fuel additive specifically designed to keep Common Rail Diesels performing like new. We've designed the dispensing bottle to fit into the door pocket so it's always in the vehicle (not sitting in the garage at home) and the concentrated formula of 150ml will treat up to 1200 litres of fuel.

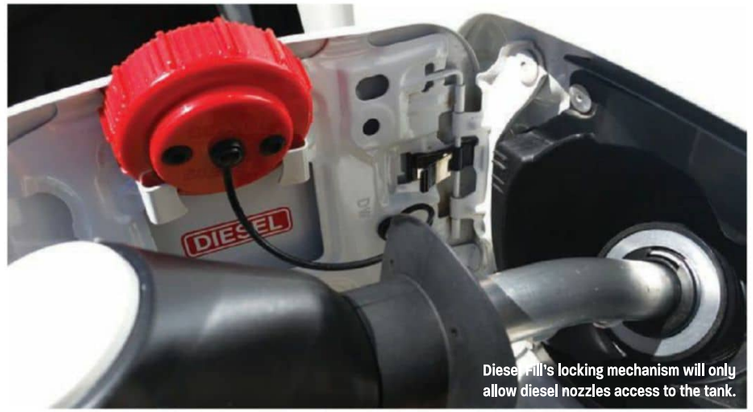
Responsive Diesel Fuel Lubricant and Conditioner protects your diesel fuel system by coating the components with a powerful nanoparticle lubricant providing an anti-corrosion barrier to water and particles while lubricating moving parts protecting diesel fuel pumps, injectors, and all fuel system components. It also has an anti-bacterial biocide in the formula to protect the whole fuel system from microbial growth.

Responsive Fuel Additive does not contain hygroscopic dispersants which are often found in fuel lubricants, especially the ones that claim they chemically remove water – which is not possible. The dispersants make the water particles combine with the fuel making it less visible. Because the water particles are smaller but still in the fuel, it flows through filters and water detection units more easily - which causes the same catastrophic damage in diesel vehicles as it would have before the dispersant was used. Responsive Fuel Additive can quieten noisy injectors, reduce emissions, and improve fuel consumption and the overall performance of your vehicle. Because it is a specialised product, it's only available from specialised diesel repairers or direct from the manufacturer – Responsive Engineering.

Solution for Diesel Mis-fuelling?

The Diesel Fill physically prevents you from filling your vehicle with the wrong fuel.

The prime reason for misfuelling is that the diesel pump filler nozzle is larger than the petrol nozzle. So, any sized nozzle or any form of filler can be inserted into the filler neck of your diesel vehicle.



Diesel Fill's locking mechanism will only allow diesel nozzles access to the tank.

Diesel Fill's locking system will only open when a diesel filler nozzle is inserted. This nozzle has the exact dimensions that will unlock Diesel Fill. Diesel Fill prevents any access to the fuel tank either to put fuel in or out without the correct nozzle providing extra security, but with the special locking tool provided with the fuel cap system, the Diesel Fill can be quickly and easily removed or replaced should the need arise. We have designed Diesel Fill's cap to be a low profile to match the original fuel cap found on the vehicle, ensuring that the fuel filler door will close without obstruction.

Unlike many similar products available – Diesel Fill has been thoroughly tested to ensure that the materials used cannot cause spark or flame, it is robust to ensure long-term durability and that the design fits and operates correctly on as many vehicles as possible found in the Australian Market. ACM

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The very simple round headlights are distinctively Citroen 2CV when seen with the bonnet up

French Revolution

Citroens may not have been the favourite of Australian mechanics, but now the brand's gone we'll miss the quirky brilliance of cars like the 2CV

WORDS AND IMAGES: **IAIN CURRY**

Which brand has been selling cars the longest in Australia without a break? Ford? Mercedes-Benz? Rolls-Royce? Nope. The rather incredible answer is Citroen, which signed its first deal with a local importer in 1923, meaning 101 years of continuously running sales here.

Alas, it's no more. Years of disastrously sluggish sales means it's been axed from Australia, leaving behind a back catalogue of some incredible cars, some terrible ones, and a hardcore mob of Citroen enthusiasts wondering where it all went wrong.

French car fans are a loyal and sometime obsessional lot. Be it Peugeot, Renault, Citroen or more obscure marques, once you fall deep for these Frenchies, it's hard to escape. I've personally owned three (two Peugeot 205s and a Renault 19), which I look back on fondly despite cracking dashboards, brittle engines, imploding clutches and body panels so flimsy they rival a snail's shell for crash protection.

I've met mechanics who simply won't touch French cars, especially Citroens. Later ones have a well-earned reputation for dodgy reliability, poor build quality, parts being hard to find, and there are often time-sucking side-steps required to complete what should be simple tasks.

And you don't want to tackle something like the Citroen DS's wonderful hydropneumatic self-levelling suspension without special tools and ample experience.

Complex escargot

From Citroen's greatest hits, you could pick the aforementioned DS, the Traction Avant, SM, GS and – for some Aussie history – the 1923 5CV which was the first motor car to lap our country back in 1925.

But it's the 2CV which is Citroen's most distinctive. No archetypal French scene is complete without a Deux chevaux in the picture. Launched in 1948, almost four million were sold before production ended in 1990. They were incredibly lightweight (roughly 600kg) and featured a front-mounted two-cylinder air-cooled engine and the most basic of interiors.

The 2CV or "tin snail" is renowned for excellent ride quality thanks to long suspension travel, despite basically riding on bicycle tyres. The original brief, so the legend goes, is it had to be capable of driving over a French ploughed field at speed and not break any eggs held in a basket. A cheap car to persuade rural French folk away from their horse and cart, and today the car's a bona fide classic with climbing values to match.

For extra distinctiveness, in the 1980s the 2CV came as a Dolly edition with two-

The Dolly was a special edition 2CV, seen her with popular pale yellow and maroon two-tone paint.

tone paint schemes. There was red and white, green and white, blue and cream and more, but most striking was the example pictured. We call it pale yellow and maroon, but it sounds better in the French: Jaune Rialto et Rouge Delage.

Vielle garde

Its owner – who asked to remain anonymous - is quite the Citroen obsessive. Parked beside his Dolly is a 2015 C4 Picasso seven-seater used for daily family duties, while the work van's a 2010 Berlingo. Mechanical skills to keep his French fleet running are a necessity, but he says it's just an accepted part of owning these cars.

"My dad always had French cars for rallies," he explains. "They were mostly Peugeot 504s, so I learned to drive in one of those. Then Dad bought me a 1963 Renault 4, for $20, which we pulled apart, but it ended up being too rusty." Ah, happy memories when you could buy a running car for the price of a day's shift behind a bar.

"This was in 1985, so the cars weren't even that old" he says. "The second one we bought for $25 was better, it was a 1968 model. But I didn't really appreciate the engineering until I got a Citroen GS and we pulled that apart. It was so cool how the hydraulics worked, how you gas up the suspension spheres and giving different rides through different pressures in the valving."

Then there was the Citroen GS's flat-four air-cooled engine. "It's not like your normal engine," he explains. "There's no head gasket, no radiator cap, and it doesn't sound rattly like an air-cooled Volkswagen. It had awesome suspension ride when compared to my friends' in their Ford V8s. I could keep up with them in my little 1.2-litre four-cylinder, but had to rev the hell out of it, up to 8000rpm and it was fine. It'd still do 150km/h."

The father and son pairing have owned roughly 20 Citroen GSs combined, but the allure of a 2CV eventually struck. In 2003, he found this Dolly. "It was in pretty bad condition," he explains. "It wasn't running, there'd been a fire under the bonnet, it was missing a headlight and it had rusted really badly. After getting it started, when taking it home the floor ruptured, so it was driving pretty funny."

Bon vin

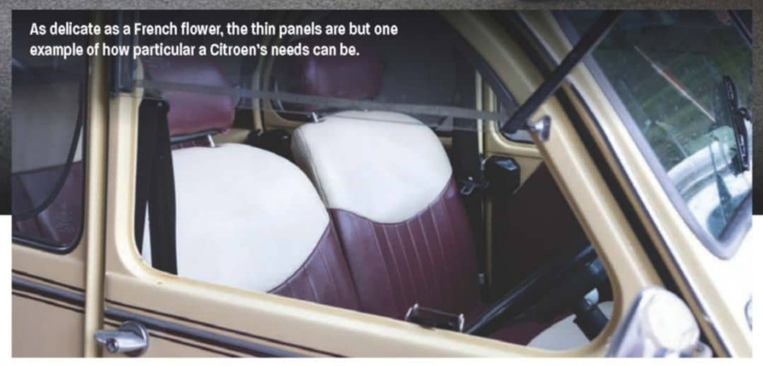
It's amusing how casually this is mentioned. But for those of us who've spent a life buying old cheapies with countless problems "we'll be able to sort no worries," having a rusty floor collapse and seeing the road beneath is all part of the charm of classic car ownership. Sort of.

"Despite its problems, I paid $3,500 for it, as it's a rare car in Australia," its owner says. "There are probably only 300 or so on the road. Mine's a UK import with 1984 on the registration, but I think it could be an '86, or even an '89 as it has dim-dip headlight wiring in it, which the UK needed at that time."

The rust was so bad (blame salty UK roads) he needed to source a whole new chassis, then bought new panels for from the firewall all the way to under the rear seat. "Parts like these are pretty easy to get as there are three or four good online shops which ship to Australia," the owner says.

The metal panels are only 0.6mm, so a specialist TIG welder was employed for the delicate work. "The thickness is very hard to deal with as it buckles very easily with heat. You blow holes in it if you use any

The 'tin snail' moniker is well given the curvaceous nature of the hatch.



As delicate as a French flower, the thin panels are but one example of how particular a Citroen's needs can be.

Engine's a 602cc two-cylinder, good for a paltry 21kW, but there's hardly much weight to pull.

other welder, so you must TIG it and clamp it in the shape you want, otherwise you won't get the doors on."

The 2CV's body still looks in excellent shape all these years later, as does the paint. The Dolly model is based on the Spēcial edition, fitted as standard with Citroen's 602cc engine, rather than the smaller and rather undercooked 435cc two-cylinder, mated to a four-speed manual transmission.

It has a roll-back sunroof with new heavy-duty canvas and flip-up windows, so driving in the rain is quite the experience. "Even when you've got everything shut the air pushes in the water while driving, so you still get wet," the owner says.

With the steering at full lock the caster angle looks extreme. Combined with those skinny 125 R15 Michelin radial tyres, the 2CV offers a unique driving experience. It somehow holds the road, but body lean is simply outrageous. Apparently you can't roll a 2CV going forwards (unless first hitting something), and you can enjoy numerous YouTube videos of people trying to do so. Most only manage when they drive it in reverse and slam the steering wheel down.

This 2CV Dolly has a compact interior with basic chairs, massive bus-like steering wheel, manual column shift and a small electric fan mounted to its dashboard to try to compensate for no air conditioning.

"There are monthly maintenance things," says its owner. "You've got to grease the nipples on the kingpins and grease the driveshafts, as they have two movements, then the usual oil checks and oil change. It doesn't take much oil, only two-and-a-half litres, as it's such a small engine."

Au revoir

While power-to-weight ratio is helped by these 2CVs having mass similar to a slab of beer, the two-cylinder's roughly 21kW is quite challenging. "You've really got to drive it to keep up with modern traffic," says its owner. "It can be a bit hairy in the wind, like trucks coming the other way blow you around, and I avoid motorways. The engine really needs to be revved, although you don't know to what as there's no rev counter, but I've had it over 100km/h before. It really sings then."

He admits "I'd be toast" should this little lightweight 2CV be involved in an accident, but perhaps that's part of the thrill and charm of these quirky Citroens. "There's the style, the history, the way they drive and the comfort," he says about why there's the enthusiasm for such cars. "They're not performance cars nor exactly reliable, but they handle so well."

Many car brands have come and gone from Australia with barely a footnote, but Citroen and cars like its unmistakable 2CV will be sadly missed. They really don't make 'em like this anymore. **ACM**

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The parts for the job

The NAPA difference: Your professional advantage

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As part of the world's largest automotive aftermarket parts business, and with mechanical and automotive electrical product Know How ingrained in our DNA, NAPA is the destination for your every aftermarket need.

We're proud to provide the full offer for your workshop - the widest product range across the largest branch network, supported by an online catalogue, partnered with our next level product and industry Know How, and second to none customer experience.

From our wide range of parts & accessories that include OE Replacement Alternators and Starter Motors, Auto Electrical accessories, Air Conditioning, Lubrication, Service Parts and Braking to smarter technologies and efficiencies, we make it our business to drive yours.

Safety first

Our commitment to operating a safer business is deeply rooted into our company values, with initiatives driven from all areas of NAPA.

We take safety to new levels, ensuring continuous improvement and the safest possible environment for anyone interacting with a NAPA team member, product or initiative.

Quality assurance

NAPA takes quality seriously, in products, Know How, processes and suppliers. To ensure consistent quality from every aspect of the business, NAPA maintains an ISO 9001 accreditation which extends to our OE manufacturers, while leading brands and partners are encouraged to maintain the same certification. We understand that quality products mean less down time and NAPA are committed to suppling genuine value and quality.

Capability and scale

Leverage Australia's most comprehensive network of automotive parts specialists with an unrivalled depth of knowledge and proven capability in responding to complex industry requirements. We can solve problems, provide technical expertise and provide valuable market insights to your business.

Air conditioning

We've sourced quality ranges and partnered with industry leaders to ensure you can get the right parts for the correct application and all the additional products you may

need to complete the job at hand. We have the widest range of brands and vehicle applications in automotive air conditioning, including compressors, condensers, evaporators, fans and belts, fittings, hose, receiver driers, consumables and workshop equipment.

Braking

We stock a wide range of reliable brake pads, brake rotors, brake drums, brake shoes and brake hydraulics for a range of applications and vehicles including small

car, passenger motor vehicles, large car, SUV, 4WD, light industrial and heavy industrial. From brake shoe adjusters to thickness testers, specialist tools and consumables, we have everything you need to complete the job and keep your workshop moving.

Automotive electrical

From the smallest PMV and SUV, to trucks, commercial equipment and mining vehicles, we've got the widest range of connectivity, circuit control and protection,

voltage control, alternators and starter motors, towing, communications, batteries, chargers and jump starters, safety and visibility. We also house a full range of lighting for a variety of industries and applications from inspection and workshop lighting, through to work lights, safety lights and beacons, to driving lights.

Servicing

Whether it's a major or minor service, we know that time is money, and that downtime is expensive, so we've made sure we've got the full range of products to

keep your workshop efficient and running like clockwork. See us for filters, lubricants, plugs and ignition leads, belts and tensioners, globes, wipers, gaskets and workshop consumables, as well as our wide range of specialty tools and workshop equipment to keep you moving. NAPA is the one stop shop for your servicing needs.

Tools and equipment

Access almost any size vehicle with the right lift. We've got lifts for trucks and equipment up to 65-tonne. See our range of jacks, air conditioning service machines,

garage equipment, brake servicing, wheel servicing and alignment, air compressors, road worthy equipment, diagnostics, specialty tools, power tools, hand tools, welding and storage.

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Not only do we have the knowledge, experience and range to complete any suspension and driveline job, we've got the parts you need to keep any engine cool.

From drive belts and water pumps to thermostats and radiators, no matter the size of the vehicle or application, we've got you covered.

Business solutions

NAPA aims to contribute to improved safety, increased productivity and profit growth.

We provide you with a professional advantage, presenting more opportunities for your business to save time and money through smarter business activities. Yes, we sell parts, but we also have the application and technical knowledge to ensure you get the right one for your vehicle no matter its size. Importantly, we excel in implementing new efficiencies into your organisation through:

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- Range consolidation activities
- OE Alternative supply chain options
- Inventory and vendor rationalisation and standardisation recommendations
- Strategic sourcing programs
- Fleet profiling and packaging
- Automation
- Vending solutions
- Freight aggregation

Business integration

At NAPA we understand how precious your time is. Our unique e-commerce software, NAPA PROLink, is a comprehensive, industry-leading online catalogue and e-commerce platform that allows your teams to consistently and accurately identify and order the right parts for your fleets and vehicles. Designed to integrate into your existing ERP/OCI systems to allow for 24/7 automated ordering, NAPA PROlink provides simplicity in multiple points in your organisation. Features include a Google-type parts identification, plus live visibility of stock and price at your nearest NAPA, technical support and a simple, responsive, easy to navigate platform.

We leverage our expertise, range and capability to keep your workshop moving. To us, our business is more than just parts. Our business is to make yours more efficient. ACM

For more details about NAPA Auto Parts, or to find your nearest location, visit napaparts.com.au

No matter where in Australia mechanics are, NAPA Auto Parts is there to support them.

NAPA Auto Parts has a wide range of top quality brands across the entire spectrum of auto repair.

Images: NAPA Auto Part.

Images: Burson Auto Parts.

We'll Get it Sorted

Nothing says 'We'll Get it Sorted' quite like the on-the-ground support Burson provides workshops.

Burson Auto Parts moves in a new direction with the launch of a new tagline

Burson Auto Parts, Australia's leading provider of automotive aftermarket parts, tools and equipment, has unveiled its latest campaign, 'We'll Get it Sorted,' capturing the core of its dedication to the trade sector. For over 50 years, Burson has stood side-by-side with mechanics and automotive professionals, helping them overcome everyday challenges with ease and efficiency.

This new tagline encapsulates Burson's commitment to being a reliable, knowledgeable partner that businesses can count on.

"No matter the challenge, we've been your parts professionals and now We'll Get it Sorted," Bapcor Trade Group Marketing and Communications Manager Fiona Gotas said.

Built on relationships and reliability

Founded in 1971 by Garry Johnson and Ron Burgoine, Burson began as a small Melbourne-based operation, distributing automotive parts and accessories to service stations. Fast-forward to today, and Burson boasts a national presence with over 215 stores and over 1,800 team members, making them the go-to parts provider for more than 40,000 trade customers across Australia.

The tagline, 'We'll Get it Sorted,' is a celebration of Burson's legacy as a trusted partner.

Whether it's sourcing hard-to-find parts or providing on time delivery, Burson is there, supporting businesses from metro cities to regional towns.

"We are more than just parts provider we are an extension of our customers businesses," Fiona stated.

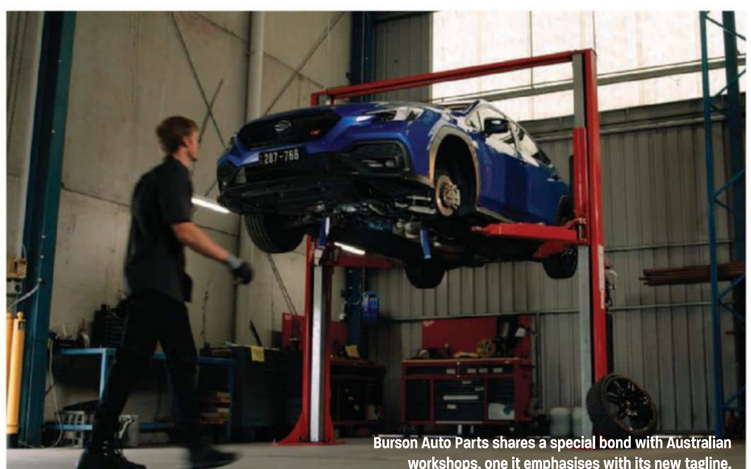
"We go above and beyond to find the right solutions for our customers every time.

"Our goal is to make life easier for automotive professionals, helping them get the job done right every time."

What 'We'll Get it Sorted' means for the trade

For Burson, "We'll Get It Sorted" isn't just a tagline; it's a promise to mechanics, workshop owners, and industry professionals across Australia. Burson prides itself on being more than just a supplier—it's an extension of the workshops it serves, committed to ensuring that every part, every tool, and every solution arrives exactly when needed.

Through innovations like Burson EzyParts, an easy-to-use platform that streamlines parts identification and ordering, Burson continues to support the efficiency and profitability of Australian automotive workshops. EzyParts is one of many ways Burson makes business easier for trade customers, allowing them to focus on what they do best serving their customers.



Burson Auto Parts shares a special bond with Australian workshops, one it emphasises with its new tagline.

The heart of Burson: The trusted trade partner

Burson Auto Part's new campaign reflects its core foundation, which is its people — a brand automotive workshops can trust, much like a dependable mate who is always ready to lend a hand.

Burson embodies the laid-back, trustworthy nature Australians love. 'We'll Get it Sorted' is as much a statement of reliability as it is a nod to the Australian hard working adventurer spirit, to be able to rely on your local mates who have always been a part of the community. The Burson team believe that no problem is too big when you've got the right support.

With a commitment to on-time delivery, a vast selection of high-quality brands, and a team of passionate 'car people', Burson is positioned as the number one trade partner that Australia's mechanics and automotive businesses rely on.

Moving forward: Supporting the trade community

As Burson looks to the future, it remains focused on empowering and making the jobs of automotive professionals easier. Whether in bustling urban centres or rural regions, Burson's network of over 1,200 delivery vehicles ensures rapid access to the parts workshops need. The company's support goes beyond delivery—it's about forging relationships, understanding customer needs, and providing solutions that drive business success.

"Our people know their parts, they know the industry, and they understand the challenges that workshops face every day. We're here to make those challenges easier and find the right solution every time," Fiona added.

With 'We'll Get it Sorted', Burson Auto Parts reinforces its role as a trusted, loyal partner that's dedicated to the success of the automotive trade community across Australia. ACM

For more info, email marketing @burson.com.au or visit burson.com.au

Lap of honour

Celebrating great partners at the Great Race

No better spot to pay homage to Castrol and its workshop customers than the picturesque Mt Panorama.

Castrol has hit the throttle on its 125-year anniversary celebrations, uniquely recognising its independent workshop customers at the iconic Bathurst 1000.

The names of 27 of Castrol's long-standing customers were integrated into the livery of the Castrol Racing Tickford Ford Mustang (#55) in advance of The Great Race – securing the workshops' places in Mt Panorama history.

Castrol General Manager Jane Carland said the brand's anniversary was a fitting time to acknowledge the loyal customers that continued to put their faith in Castrol.

"Independent workshops are an integral part of the Castrol team, and we wanted to do something visible and symbolic to say thank you for always trusting us," she said.

"Castrol is woven into the fabric of The Great Race, so it made sense that we would do something extra special at Mt Panorama."

Storied race

A combined 500 years of Castrol history was on board for 161 exhilarating laps of the challenging 1000km race.

A portion of that history included HMR Australia – a workshop located in Bathurst's neighbouring town of Orange.

Owner Jason Hunt said Castrol had been crucial to his business for over 16 years, but his relationship with the brand began almost 14 years earlier when he started his apprenticeship.

"Castrol have been absolutely critical to us as a small family-owned business," he said.

"They have always backed us up...the product support is just phenomenal, and their coverage is enormous.

"They really made you feel part of the Castrol experience and team. It's just a well-known brand, it's trusted, it's good quality, I've always stuck with it."

As part of its anniversary celebrations, Castrol has been showcasing its customers at each Supercars round, with loyal workshop owners receiving prominent branding on the #55 bumper over six racing weekends, along with an exclusive Castrol trackside experience and marketing support.

Family reunion

The unique activity has generated significant exposure for the small businesses – reaching hundreds of thousands of race attendees and millions of television viewers.

Barry Bangay Motors owner, Joel Evans, said attention from media and spectators was at an all-time high at the Sandown 500 after the legendary Castrol TOM's livery was revealed for the first time.

"Seeing our logo on there, I'll have those memories forever," he said.

The team at Chris Colgrave Automotive from Launceston were also recognised for their loyalty during a spectacular round of racing at the Tassie SuperSprint.

After starting out selling pints and quarts of Castrol at his local service station as a 13-year-old, owner Chris Colgrave said Castrol was the only choice when he started his own business 27 years ago.

"We've never changed. When you're on a good thing just stick to it," he said.

"To have a business like ours, and our logo on the front of that car...it's awesome. It's something that I would never ever have dreamed of."

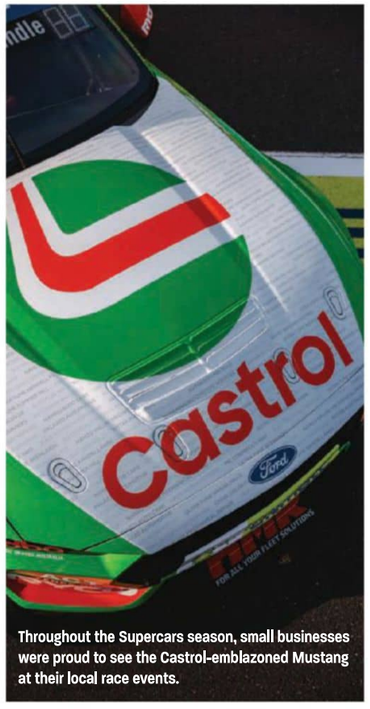
Ongoing support

Carland said she was delighted that independent workshops across Australia continued to put their trust in Castrol.

"We've been committed to pushing boundaries through research, technology and racing for 125 years, and it's a big part of why Castrol remains the brand of choice for manufacturers, professionals and enthusiasts," she said.

"Castrol is a brand that is steadfast in its reputation for quality and reliability in all conditions, and this focus helps independent workshops build trust with their own customers.

"We remain relentlessly focused on accelerating our game, so our customers can accelerate theirs." ACM



Throughout the Supercars season, small businesses were proud to see the Castrol-emblazoned Mustang at their local race events.

Images: Castrol Australia.

Not only is there a skills shortage, but some apprentices are losing work due to the rising cost of business.

Image: industrieblick/stock.adobe.com.

Counting the cost

Action needed to address shortage and struggles

More practical support is needed to stop apprentices from dropping out due to cost pressures.

This is according to Apprenticeships Are Us Ltd (ARU) Managing Director Michael Wentworth, who said instability from the cost of living crisis is affecting an already struggling shortage of apprentices.

"We are at a critical juncture," he said.

"The prolonged recession is placing immense strain on automotive workshops nationwide, forcing them to make tough decisions about staffing, including apprentices.

"With customers tightening their budgets and spending less on vehicle maintenance, workshops are under significant pressure to retain staff amid declining sales."

Solutions needed

With a Federal Election on the cards for 2025, Wentworth said it was important for political parties to consider solutions to secure a strong pipeline of auto apprentices.

"The escalating cost of living is driving young people away from the automotive field," he said.

"Many feel the need to contribute to their families' finances amidst rising household expenses, or they struggle to build their own lives in such challenging economic conditions.

"Additionally, with overall disposable income declining, there is less spending on vehicle maintenance, which further hampers workshops' ability to train new apprentices."

There are figures to back this urgency as well, with Wentworth pointing to a number of surveys indicating that businesses – including workshops – are struggling.

"Global human resources platform Deel, has also shared recent survey results, showing about 41 per cent of respondents to the survey indicated that they plan to shed jobs, while 45 per cent flagged wage cuts," he said. ACM

Find out how Apprenticeships Are Us can help you or your workshop! Visit aaprus.com.au or contact 9821 6900 and info@apprus.com.au for more information

About Apprenticeships Are Us

Apprenticeships Are Us Ltd is a registered charity and not-for-profit, founded 18 years ago, that provides mentorship and employment opportunities to young people who are interested in pursuing a career in the automotive sector.

The unique group training organisation consists of automotive apprenticeship specialists working with the automotive industry to source apprenticeship opportunities. This means they can be more hands-on by regularly working with apprentices and their host businesses to ensure the satisfaction and well-being of both.

New chapter

AMA Group Hall of Famer shares his legend

You'd be hard pressed to find someone who knows the ins and outs of car parts quite like Chris 'Sewelly' Sewell.

The Business Development Manager for VIC/NSW at ACM Parts has certainly done his fair share of laps across the Australian auto industry.

Tinkering with greatness

Chris was one of the first 'officially recognised' parts interpreters to come out of Richmond TAFE in the 80s.

At the time, however, his mind was more focussed on his sporting pursuits.

Chris was a talented cricketer in his younger years, playing in the UK, Sri Lanka and the West Indies, representing Victoria and Australia in under-19s.

"As it turned out, when you play against the best players, you think you're good, until you're not," Chris joked.

"There was always someone better, so I didn't go on with it."

So Chris powered on and completed his apprenticeship. Upon completion, he received a very special visitor to his graduation that presented a once in a lifetime opportunity.

"I won the apprentice of the year from my group, and Peter Brock presented the trophy," Chris said.

"I had a chat with him after it, and he asked me to come work for him.

"I didn't know anything about racing cars, but he wanted me to come and help with Brock Commodores."

This began an exciting chapter between Chris and the Australian racing icon.

Chris would venture between dealerships, arranging for conversations of regular Commodores to a Brock-blazoned beast.

Chris' connection with the Brocks continued on through to Peter's tragic death in 2006.

His unique connection to racing royalty sparked Chris to write several books.

This included the *Brock Bible* which catalogued every Brock Commodore sent out the shop.

"I also did a commemorative edition ... I did 206 copies of it – same number of races he won – Bev (Brock) and I signed and numbered them and donated the proceeds to the Peter Brock foundation," Chris said.

All the Kings Men; another book from Chris details the day-to-day life of Peter, Chris and the team working on Brock Commodores.

"I've seen so many books about Brock the racer and the person, but not one about behind the scenes at HDT," Chris added.

Right parts for the job

After his time working with Peter had passed, Chris journeyed across jobs with various companies including Mitsubishi and Kia.

It wasn't long before he stumbled on to the initial stages of ACM Parts.

"I saw the business model and realised it wasn't just second-hand parts. It was genuine parts, OEM parts and aftermarket parts," Chris said.

"Having been in the industry for about 30 years at the time, I could see insurance companies trying to lower their costs and thinking this would be a go-er.

"And here I am 10 years later."

ACM Parts continues to expand its offerings of recycled, aftermarket and OEM-quality parts across thousands of SKUs and models.

"In the early days, it was linked to Suncorp so we had a guarentee that we'd get access to cars that were total losses," Chris said.

"But not every panel shop is a corporate shop ... there's mum and dad shops out there looking to minimise costs.

"As we developed, we got more imported and paralleled parts as well.

"We create that competitive tension.

"Back in the day, it'd be the dealer's price or bad luck."

Nowadays, Chris plays a crucial role in what is Australia's largest recycled parts operation.

More sites, more staff and a fleet of ACM Parts trucks – Chris loved seeing the company push for more innovation.

"I've seen a lot of change, but definitely in the last three years we've really kicked some goals," he said.

This included cataloguing, which Chris admitted was a far cry from his days with the Brocks.

"I used to be able quote an entire VK Commodore – each part number and price – off the top of my head," he said.

His own trophy

Chris isn't one to be short of words, however earlier in 2024 he found himself speechless at the AMA Group Hall of Fame inductions at Crown Casino in Melbourne.

He was wrangled into attending the night by ACM Parts Executive General Manager Adam O'Sullivan, not realising he was going to get the call up.

"There's nothing worse than going to these types of nights and hearing people talk about how good they are," Chris joked.

"I went there as a table filler on table #1, which was pretty good.

"Then they announced the Hall of Fame ... and they said my name.

"I'm not normally lost for words - I can talk underwater - but I was totally lost up there."

The AMA Group Hall of Fame recognises members of the company who have made outstanding contributions to it and the wider auto parts industry.

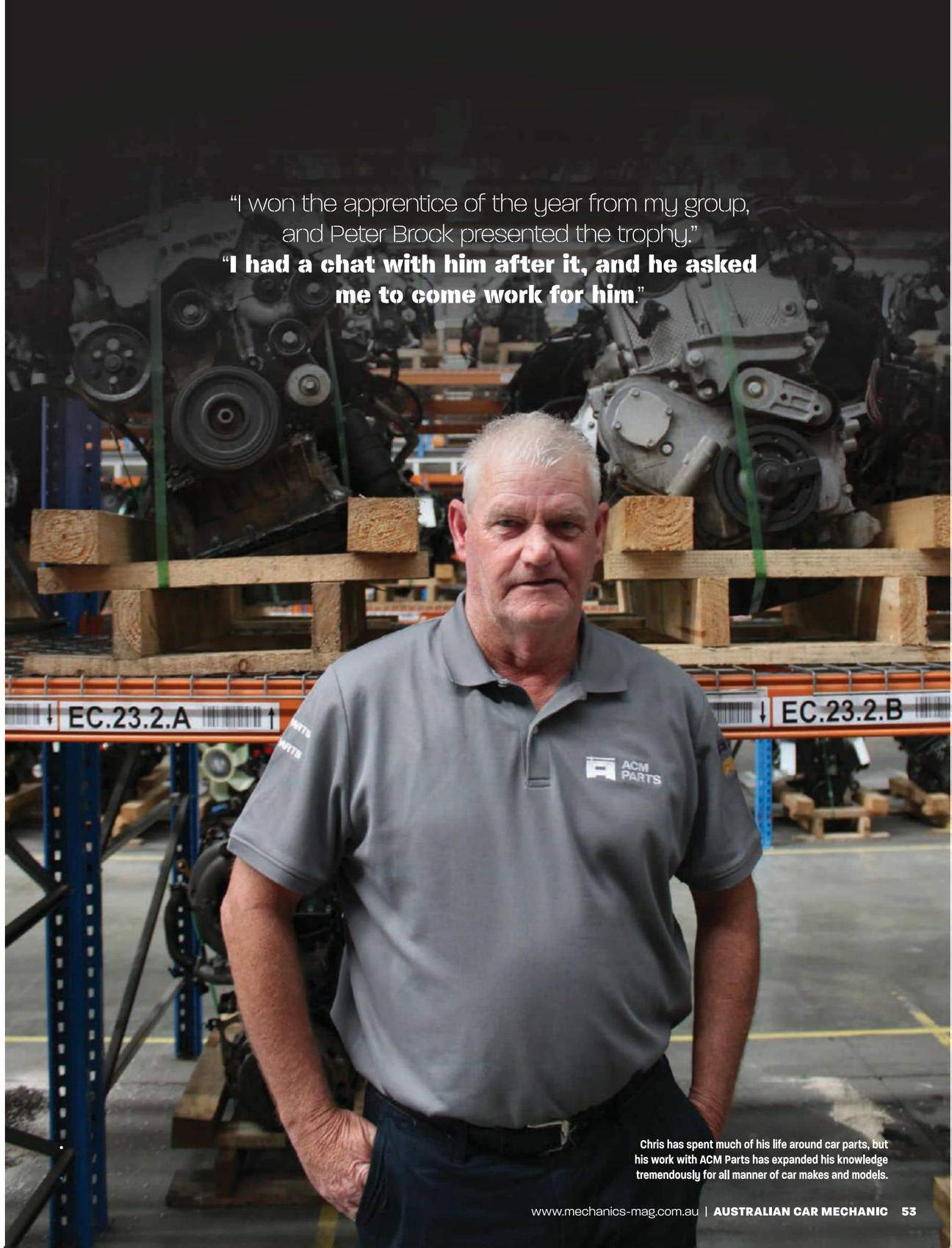
Chris might've had too much fun along the way, but his induction was certainly well-earned given his passion and dedication.

"I got a nice big trophy, which I had to carry around the casino all night," Chris said.

"It was really special." ACM

Gone are the days of having to hand-document each part number and quote off by heart, with SKUs and barcodes making cataloguing much easier.

Images: Prime Creative Media.


"I won the apprentice of the year from my group, and Peter Brock presented the trophy."
"I had a chat with him after it, and he asked me to come work for him."
EC.23.2.A
EC.23.2.B
ACM PARTS

Chris has spent much of his life around car parts, but his work with ACM Parts has expanded his knowledge tremendously for all manner of car makes and models.

Auto smarts

The transformative impact of neurodiverse talent in automotive apprenticeships

Workshops have traditionally been hesitant to bring in apprentices with diagnosed neurodiversity (such as ADHD), but that stigma needs changing.

This is according to Apprenticeships Are Us Ltd (ARU) Employment Manager Kyle Rettig, who said neurodiverse apprentices are actually proven to have a particular disposition to the automotive industry.

"Whether it's diagnosing an engine fault that's stumped everyone or finding new ways to improve efficiency in the workshop, fresh perspectives are invaluable," Rettig said.

"Apprentices with ADHD are natural-born problem solvers. Their brains are wired for divergent thinking, a trait that allows them to approach issues from creative angles.

"For example, the automotive industry is evolving rapidly, and hybrid and electric vehicles are becoming the new norm. With these rapid changes I believe hiring someone with the ability to think creatively is no longer just an advantage, it's a necessity."

Kate's story

Kate Taylor is a 21-year-old apprentice from Perth who was hired recently at a business called Keystone Garage in Perth. Her ARU Apprentice Employment Manager Kyle Rettig said Ms Taylor has already proved an asset to the team.

"I have always been hyperactive and impulsive. I also had difficulties concentrating," she said.

"I did genuinely wonder whether my ADHD would stand in the way of being hired as an apprentice.

"I was diagnosed officially when I was older and could be medicated for my symptoms. My boss was already aware of my diagnosis and has been really supportive throughout the whole process.

"In fact, there are other apprentices who work here with ADHD and we are all given the opportunity to progress and succeed."

Attention to detail

According to Rettig, apprentices with neurodiversity (ADHD) also can have the ability to experience periods of hyperfocus, moments where they are laser-focused on a task that interests them.

"Focus on detail, especially when working with intricate vehicle components, electrical systems or collision repair, is essential in the automotive industry for example," he said.

The automotive industry is evolving rapidly, and resilience and adaptability are required to ensure the sector continues to stay competitive.

"Apprentices with ADHD are often used to tackling challenges, developing resilience, and finding ways to succeed in environments that might not always be designed for them," Rettig said.

"I've worked with apprentices who have had to manage their ADHD their entire lives, and in doing so, they've developed an inner resilience that serves them well in the workplace. They're not easily fazed by the unexpected."

Rettig added that apprentices with ADHD present a unique opportunity for growth, innovation, and success.

"At ARU, we've seen over and over again how apprentices with ADHD thrive in the right environments. They are innovators, problem solvers, and hard workers who can add immense value to workshops willing to move past outdated stigma."

"By creating structured environments, offering mentorship, and aligning their strengths with their roles, workplaces can unlock the incredible potential of these apprentices. "It's not about making accommodations, it's about recognising their strengths and harnessing them to make the workplace more inclusive for everyone." ACM

Find out how Apprenticeships Are Us can help you or your workshop! Visit aaprus.com.au or contact 9821 6900 and info@apprus.com.au for more information

Kate Taylor was diagnosed with ADHD at an older age, but says she's one of many neurodivergent apprentices out there.

Images: Apprenticeships Are Us.

Kyle Rettig (left) is no stranger to helping apprentices of all abilities find a career pathway.

"For example, the automotive industry is evolving rapidly, and hybrid and electric vehicles are becoming the new norm. With these rapid changes I believe **hiring someone with the ability to think creatively is no longer just an advantage, it's a necessity.**"

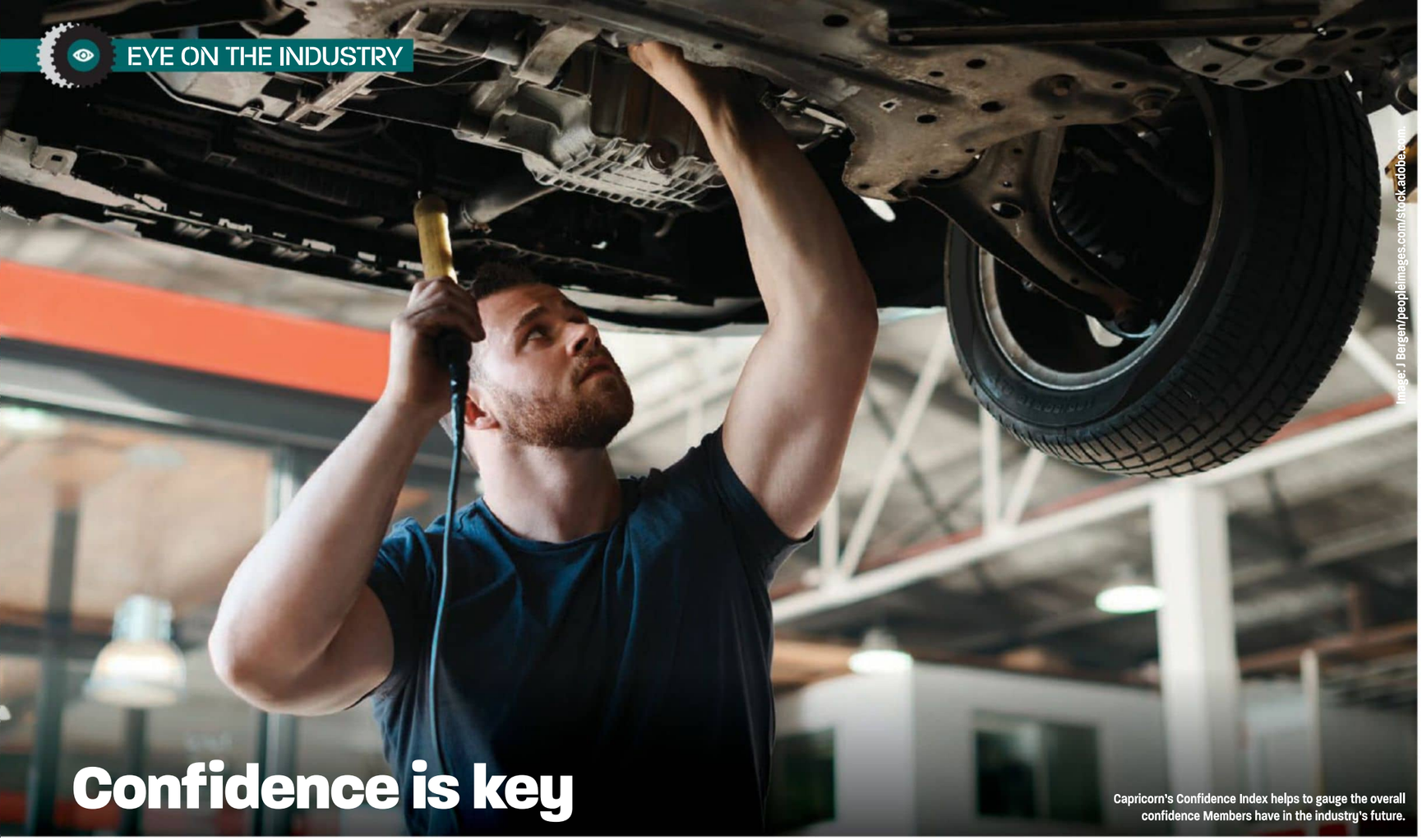


Image: J Bergen/peopleimages.com/stock.adobe.com

Confidence is key

Capricorn's Confidence Index helps to gauge the overall confidence Members have in the industry's future.

Capricorn's State of the Nation gives an annual insight into the opinions and outlook of auto repair industry

Capricorn's annual snapshot of the automotive aftermarket has found confidence has increased in the industry but several key problems, like getting skilled workers, remain for collision businesses.

The State of the Nation 2024 survey found that confidence in the industry was at a four year high, the highest level since it began recording the responses of members in 2020.

Cost of living pressures and revealing figures of succession planning were some of the other highlights from the comprehensive report.

The survey garnered answers from more than 1500 Member businesses across the aftermarket sector, the majority of which are mechanic workshops.

The key issues

Similar to 2023's report, State of the Nation 2024 found skills shortage topped the problems faced by automotive businesses at 54 per cent of answers but this year's result was equalled by the issue of managing to achieve a work life balance.

There was a slight improvement in the skills crisis in automotive according to the survey with 39 per cent saying they are still struggling to get skilled staff after 2023's high of 43 per cent.

The third-highest concern among Members was the cost of living pressures and its effect on price-sensitive customers (45 per cent).

Collision repair businesses are also looking to apprentices to solve some of the pressures with 82 per cent employing young trade interns and more than half saying they will continue to do so.

The State of the Nation also noted that it had "consistently found that automotive apprenticeships are seen as less attractive than apprenticeships in other industries.'

The report also included a breakout on the Australian Collision Industry Alliance, the key industry not-for profit association specifically tasked with addressing this uptake in recruits in the hard-hit collision sector.

Confidence grows

Despite these factors the confidence gauge that Capricorn has evaluated for the first time shows a gradually increasing confidence in the industry with most businesses showing high to very high levels of confidence in their own business.

The Capricorn Confidence Index combines the responses to three questions, confidence in the automotive industry, confidence in their own business' future and plans for business growth, to calculate a single score out of 100 points. This score reflects the overall business outlook of respondents, and with four years of data and insight, offers Capricorn and the automotive industry a stable and reliable metric.

Capricorn CEO designate Brad Gannon highlighted the resilience of the aftermarket industry despite ongoing challenges.

"The Capricorn Confidence Index is a barometer for the health of the automotive aftermarket industry, and we believe it's the most accurate measure of business owners' confidence in the future of the automotive aftermarket," Gannon said.

"Business and industry confidence is often used as an indicator of the overall condition of an industry and is a helpful tool in anticipating and preparing for future challenges."

In 2024, the Capricorn Confidence Index for Australia is 71.3 points, so while the industry is facing significant change and current economic conditions may be challenging, the majority of business owners are confident in the future of their industry and their business.

Over the past four years, the Index in Australia has improved by three points from 68.3. This reflects growing optimism amongst Capricorn Members regarding their current position and economic outlook.

"At Capricorn, we take great pride in working in an industry that is prepared to tackle the future, whatever it may be, with enthusiasm and optimism," Gannon said.

Capricorn as a reflection of this confidence now in its 50th year since a group of service station owners got together in 1974, can now boast more than 30,000 members.

Overall high levels of confidence in their own businesses was at 65 per cent up from 56 per cent and for collision repair businesses that responded this was only slightly lower at 63 per cent.

A significant majority of mechanic workshops were either very confident (41 per cent) or extremely confident (27 per cent) in their businesses.

It also noted that 71 per cent of businesses intended to grow with the highest percentage targeting increasing efficiency (67 per cent) increasing profit margins (56 per cent) and hiring more staff (45 per cent).

Price pressures

As mentioned, the report raises the rise in price-sensitive customers or other cost of living pressures at 45 per cent of respondents with 40 per cent listing the rise in the cost of parts as a big problem.

Technical issues rated lower as the biggest problem among responders with 26 per cent listing the access to diagnostics and the information, while only 17 per cent listed EV's as a major problem.

Fifteen per cent listed insurance companies determining prices as a major challenge for their business.

Capricorn Member Director for Victoria and Tasmania Mark Cooper said in the report the inconsistent flow of repairs this can result in, demands businesses plan and reassess resources.

"The cost-of-living crisis has really started to bite. Demand for our services has started to drop off as customers delay their vehicle servicing to save a few pennies.

"As we all know, while this might reduce workshop bookings initially, after a while the tow trucks will start appearing and our

A breakdown of confidence findings.

Image: Capricorn.

workshops will fill up with major repairs. Either way, we get the work—it just isn't consistent. That makes managing our businesses and achieving the desired profitability a little harder.

"If you're feeling the economic squeeze, now is a good time to revisit your labour rates, charge for time spent on diagnostics and end time discounting. Make use of the technical data and support available and other industry sources to help you with those tricky diagnostic problems and turn diagnostics and fault-finding into a profit stream, not an expense."

Succession planning

The State of the nation report has also highlighted another issue the aftermarket industry is faced with and that is the ageing nature of its business owners.

Almost a quarter of business owners responded they were planning to retire in the next five years with a further 22 per cent planning to do so within the next decade.

Of those who have a retirement plan in place, a quarter are planning to transfer ownership while 41 per cent will put the business up for sale. As many as 22 per cent responded to the survey that they would close the business down.

Talent pipeline

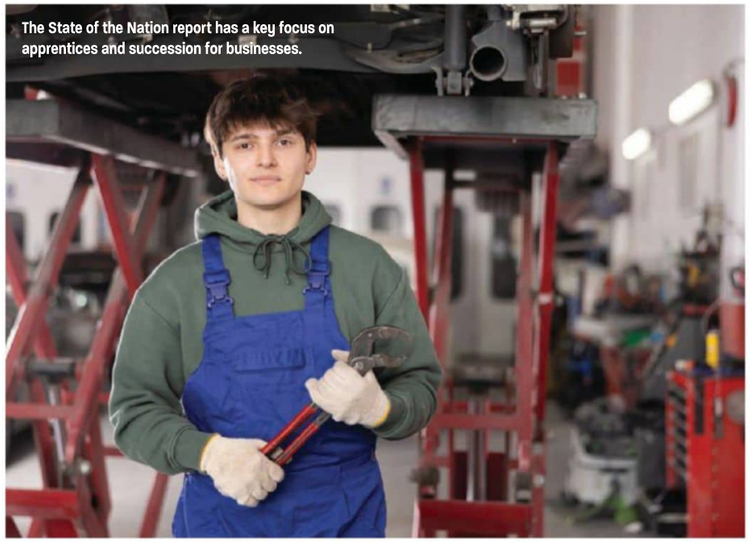
But in signs the industry is also changing, apprenticeship uptake is still strong with 65 per cent employing newcomers down slightly from 73 per cent.

Women in automotive have also substantially increased with 16 per cent of businesses employing women, who now make up one if five workers in the aftermarket according to the report.

This is not just front of house and administration roles either, as now 36 per cent of female workers are listed as 'on the tools' up from 19 per cent in 2021. **ACM**

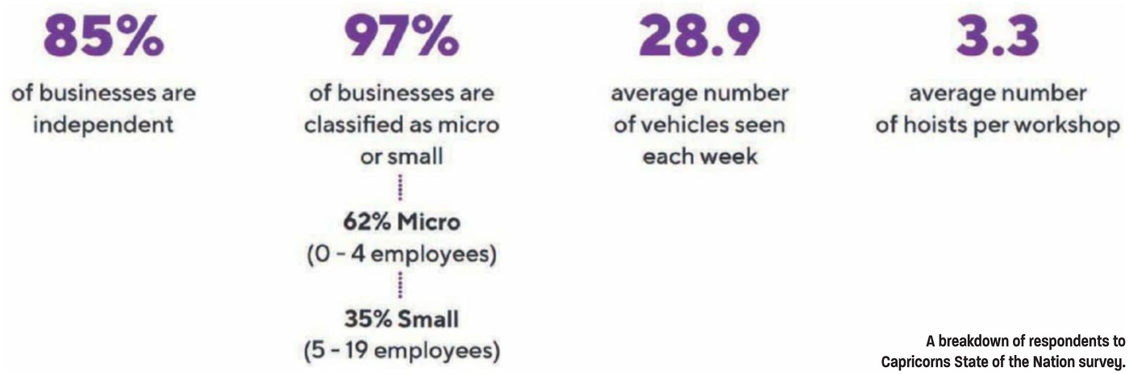
As well as mechanic workshops, the State of the Nation includes other automotive business types, such as mobile mechanics.

Image: BJ Day Stock/stock.adobe.com.



The State of the Nation report has a key focus on apprentices and succession for businesses.

Image: JackF/stock.adobe.com.



A breakdown of respondents to Capricorns State of the Nation survey.

Image: Capricorn.

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